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RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL CHANGE AND
"THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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To my wife, Betty - whose contribution has been invaluable; whose understanding of the current crisis has not been unnoticed and whose expectation for the resource of the church to eliminate problems gives added hope.

PREFACE

Whoever it was who coined the statement, "Build a better mouse-trap and the world will beat a pathway to your door," evidently did not realize that many innovations have universally been greeted with resistance. Even when an invention or discovery has been proven of value by the inventor or explorer, society in general only slowly breaks with the established order of things.

As we look about us, much that we take for granted has had a history of resistance. The lighted streets of our city is an example. We have observed pictures in cinema or art of the old "lamp-lighter" making his rounds in a city during the early decades of the last century. As city life became more complicated and working hours were extended past the evening hours, there came a need for cheap, efficient street lighting. Coal gas-lighting was the result.

It is difficult for us to understand that this change in society was accompanied by resistance, with reasons being given that they encouraged late hours in children and would create a general rise in sexual immorality. A half century later there occurred another wave of resistance when streetlighting was changed from gas to electricity. We still hold to a sentimental attachment to the old and resistance to the new, as we exchange Christmas cards showing the carolers gathered on a street corner, and singing in the glow of the gas light.

The purpose of this dissertation is to research and reflect on the resistance to social change and the church's witness. To this inquiry are brought resources from theology, sociology and psychology.

In the midst of the intricacies and variations of social change we will attempt to arrive at a synthesis of understandings from these fields, for very few Americans *know* "how the other half lives"!

In Chapter I, after probing the thesis problem, we will attempt to outline representative changes within our culture from a brief, historical point of view. We will propose characteristics of rejectors and acceptors, with the understanding that a strict dichotomy would be unfeasible.

In Chapter II we will continue with a critique of causes of resistance as a reaction-phenomenon in social change. Sociological factors will be our primary concern with an inquiry into the quasi-revolution in the battleground of middle-America and modern man as it relates to resistance. We will proceed with an analysis of social and personal factors among reference groups.

In Chapter III we will be concerned with the psychological factors in resistance with special attention given to the resistance factors in the white attitude system. We will discuss the role of needs as "loss" and "ordeal."

In Chapter IV we will discuss the many options for solution available to the church. The "collaborative style" as a model will suggest a number of creative ministries. We will conclude with an illustrated summary directing the attention toward a gestalt in the witness of the church.

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CHAPTER I

FACTORS IN CHANGE AND RESISTANCE

I. THE PROBLEM

We live in an age of great frustration, which is reflected in the resistance to social change. We Americans want simple, direct, quick solutions to perplexing problems. But they simply do not exist and cannot be produced.

A. Questions Proposed

As we probe the thesis problem, a series of questions and observations are proposed for consideration. Is it true that social change refers to modifications which occur in the life patterns of a people? What are the factors contributing to these modifications? Does change take place inevitably in some fixed sequence?

B. Modifications Within Society

Is the modification within society one of deterioration, as in the thought of Lao-tze? Do the changes run in cycles, as seen in Buddhist doctrines, the philosophers of Greece, or Marcus Aurelius? Or will the "modus operandi" be one of a static, traditional society, without social change, as in medieval times with primary emphasis given to the soul and the future existence? Or, according to early modern times, do we see social change as a continuous upward progress,

and man as capable of achieving a perfect social order? In this category might be placed the influences of optimistic views of Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century, French thinkers like Turgot and Condorcet in the eighteenth century, pioneer sociologists like Auguste Comte or evolutionists like Spencer.

Is the modification, according to more recent thought, one of purposeful change (telic) and the result of conscious systematic effort through education and the promotion of knowledge (Lester F. Ward and Charles A. Ellwood)? Or is social change, deterministic? According to Sumner and Keller, who took a laissez-faire position toward social change, conscious effort and rational planning have very little effect until the "hour has struck" for a change in the mores of a people. For example, "Christian" America practiced slavery during the first century of its existence. According to Keller, resistance to slavery and agitation against it had to wait until it was on its way out before it became effective.

Do we think of the modification of society as being determined primarily by economic factors? The first to give this concept definite form was Karl Marx, father of modern socialism. Marx and collaborator, Friedrich Engels, in the Communist Manifesto, claimed that the very weapons by which the bourgeoisie gained power over feudalism were being turned against them and that the proletariat would rise to the highest stage of the social order. While we may differ with this theory as a viable one for social change, we cannot overlook the fact that millions of people on earth accept Marx's conclusions regarding

the course of human events.

More acceptable to many of us is the noteworthy theory that religion has been a chief factor of social change. Max Weber, for one, elaborated this theory as he attempted to prove that various religious systems have had a decisive influence on the life and economies of their adherents. We shall return to this emphasis in Chapter IV.¹

In seeking to answer questions of this nature, we would probably follow the suggestion of Sorokin in his *Contemporary Social Theories* and say that "Change is caused by the interaction of the various parts of a culture, none of which can be considered 'primary.'"²

II. THE POINT OF VIEW OF HISTORY

Let us now look at the problem more closely, from the point of view of history. We have, of course, presupposed this approach during the foregoing section. Now let us gain reasonable mastery of it from the aspect of resistance to social change. This knowledge should become a point of reference and prove helpful as we proceed. We may think of these as three lessons from History. I shall now proceed to name the first of these lessons and attempt to relate this lesson to the problem of resistance to social change.

A. Idea Systems Compared

The first lesson from the historical perspective, which we

¹See Chapter IV, p. 88.

²Samuel Koenig, *Sociology* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1957), p. 290.

consider as being applicable to social change and anti-change, has to do with the idea system or dogma as a moving force in the lives of nations and people. From an extensive list of such "idea systems" let us distinguish three types: the historical cycle, the redemptive character of history and the idea of linear progress. Robert A. Nisbet, professor of sociology at the University of California, Riverside, in referring to these, writes thus:

The idea of historical cycles, whether in Aristotle or Spengler and the idea of the redemptive character of history, whether in Augustine or Niebuhr, and the idea of linear progress, whether in Fontenelle or the reigning theories of the Soviet Union, are one and all dogmas as constitutive of human belief today as they were in the ages of their earliest appearance.³

Societies have been motivated and shaped by these dogmas. Men have sacrificed life to preserve them, while others have resisted as strongly. Though we pursue the lesson, from an historical point of view, we must voice at the outset, the limitation of history. A search for dates as to when a particular change or anti-change took place would be futile. "How, in any event, could change conceived as growth be dated? At what hour of the day, what day in the month, does the organism pass from one stage to another?"⁴

1. *The cyclical idea of history.* The starting point in a consideration of the cyclical idea of history may be illustrated by the Greeks. The Greeks, who always had a word for it, were interested

³Robert A. Nisbet, *Social Change and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 223.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 31.

in the "physis" of things (aorist, φύσαι meaning, 'to make grow'). Consequently, to the Greeks everything quite logically had a 'physiology,' whether the object of inquiry was a tree, the state, man himself, the family, Peloponnesian wars, etc. Everything naturally changed! Everything had a life-cycle of genesis and decay patterned after the life-cycle of man. Nesbit points out that both Aristotle and Plato, who make the life-cycle the model of change and the very basis of ultimate being, are less historical than developmental in their methodology.

It follows that the coming-to-be of anything, if it is absolutely necessary, must be cyclical i.e. must return upon itself.

Aristotle⁵

In such a system of the continual recurrence of cycles, we have a hint in the Book of Ecclesiastes that there is nothing new under the sun, that all things have their seasons, and like the seasons, come and go. These examples could be multiplied in modern society, to point out how the cyclical theory becomes a force in the process of change and anti-change. The caste system of Hinduism with differences of wealth, rank and privilege, is but one of these. According to the Hindu, the caste is broken by Karma Kam sara--a force generated by a person's actions determining his destiny in the next existence, when he may have a better chance.

Many social systems have built in a devotion to this cyclical historical method as a cause for conservatism. A common excuse for

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 15.

anti-change is, "It's never been done that way!" which is another way of saying, "The wheel goes round and round, and it's always done this way." Thus we become creatures of habit, and by the repeated performance history can truly be said "to repeat itself."

2. *The redemptive character of history.* The idea of the redemptive character of history was set forth by St. Augustine, who was well schooled in Greek culture. But St. Augustine who wrote the Christian epic, "The City of God" during the years immediately following Alaric's sack of Rome in A.D. 410, repudiated the idea of infinite number of cycles. To St. Augustine, there is only one cycle of human existence, of genesis and ending. It began with the fall of Adam and will end in some near or distant future. The event of all history was the appearance of Christ. The two-fold division of history, according to St. Augustine, is simply before Christ and after Christ. Within mankind's historical development, according to St. Augustine, are six divisions or epochs. Augustine's idea of conflict expressed in the City of Man and the City of God "is the archetype of all the motivating conflicts."⁶ There is the endemic conflict within the City of Man, between good and evil and man against man. There is also the eternal conflict between the City of Man and the City of God.

The Augustinian view of history, that finds redemption only in the transhistorical, had its counterpart in the Calvinistic dogma of the Sovereignty of God. What Augustine said to the pagans of the fifth

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 86.

century, Calvin said to Geneva and to Rome in the sixteenth century, and Niebuhr has said to modern man. "History" says Niebuhr "is conceived as a unity because all historical destinies are under the domination of a single sovereignty."⁷

Our particular concern in this study is to note the relationship of this idea system to the resistance of social change. This profound dogma found the bulk of its adherents since the Reformation, among the middle class. According to the late Svend Ranulf, the links between Calvinism and Puritanism are pronounced. Ranulf agrees with the inner-worldly coincidence with the rise of capitalism, conservatism and middle-class Protestantism. We will speak of this again in Chapter IV as we discuss the witness of the Church. Suffice it now, to point out the possible relationship of adherents of this dogma with the covert aspects of the conservative personality and the attitude of anti-change toward pronounced changes in the secular world.

3. *The linear progress theory.* When we refer to the linear progress theory of historical necessity, we who have been taught forms of opinions, attitudes and beliefs in the redemptive character of history, tend to become highly resistant. For example, according to Marxism, the view of history is that the ultimate goal is the dictatorship of the proletariat and a classless society. When we turn to the Program of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, published in 1961,

⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 233.

we learn of the "progress of mankind." This "progress of mankind" is without St. Augustine's First Cause. But faith in the progress of mankind without the First Cause, may also be an element of capitalist ideology. Indeed, we have not forgotten those unfortunate days of McCarthyism (Joseph R. McCarthy, 1957 U. S. senator) when indiscriminate allegations were leveled at the leaders of the church. Why were these unsubstantiated charges made? Were they not made as a tactic of anti-change, in opposition to the Marxist idea of historical necessity? Surely the ideas of Jesus can affect changes in society more profoundly than those of Marx (Karl Marx, 1883 German political philosopher).

Within the discussion of the first lesson of history we have seen that the historical perspective is a potent force. "To say 'ideas control the world,' may be an exaggeration and oversimplification, yet concepts of reality do move men and the societies of men."⁸ Perhaps it is not an overstatement to say that the future of society on this planet may depend upon some type of accommodation of these views as they are expressed in real life situations. To see how the tension of change and anti-change within the context of the historical struggle can be resolved within this synthesis, is the challenge of twentieth century man for survival. How can two systems, communism and capitalism, each without the First Cause, and each representing the idea of linear progress through history, resolve their conflict?

⁸Eugene and Fanchon Mead, *Man Among Men* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 355.

B. History and Sociology Compared

The second lesson from history has to do with the societal change and resistance to change which history and sociology illuminate, by their different methodologies. Emory Bogardus elucidates this approach for us in his book, *A History of Social Thought*, when he says,

The historian is quite as interested in the experiences of individuals, and groups of individuals, as is the sociologist, but for a somewhat different reason. The historian wants to know what happened. His material is, to be sure, the naive narratives of the persons participating in the transaction.

The sociologist is not primarily concerned with the event itself. He rather takes that for granted. What he is more particularly concerned about are the attitudes of the persons involved, as they are reflected in their very different accounts of the same historical event. He is interested in anything, in fact, that will throw light upon these attitudes and make them intelligible.⁹

Keeping these two points of view in mind, we find that the area of our study, "resistance to social change" is illuminated by both these two disciplines. The lesson is given the following description by Richard La Piere: "Of late there has been a growing body of historical analysis that transcends the conventional."¹⁰ He goes on to point out that the institutional and social historians "direct their attention neither to wars, elections, the passing of pieces of legislation, and other social events nor to the lives and

⁹Emory S. Bogardus, *A History of Social Thought* (Los Angeles: Miller Press, 1928), p. 638.

¹⁰Richard T. LaPiere, *Social Change* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 52.

times of great men. . . ."11

We will continue the comparison of History and sociology, in their methodologies, and conclude this lesson from history with three examples.

1. *Example of wars.* Within the discussion of wars, for example, the world might well have hoped that World War I would change the basic structure and behavior toward goals for which the war was fought. It tried to make the world "safe for democracy" but, in fact, the change was not accomplished. Fixity of the status quo became the norm, as indicated by World War II, fought by the next generation.

In the realm of simple observation and common sense, nothing is more obvious than the conservative bent of human behavior, the manifest desire to preserve, hold, fix and keep stable.¹²

The priority of fixity, of anti-change, or resistance to change as seen in the historical setting, not only would seem to defy the Greek notion of change as being intrinsic to human nature and therefore to all things, but it demonstrates the persistence of the status quo as it seeks to rationalize war to change things.

2. *Example of "great men" theory.* The same may be said for the "great men" theory. The temptation to impute change or resistance to change to some recognized leader of a period in which the event took place, is due to the fact "that most of the documents of history

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Nisbet, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

are couched in great man terms."¹³ Thus, what happened in Lincoln's time, becomes, in the record, what Lincoln did, even as today the conservative point of view in the land, and which we read about in the newspaper accounts, is essentially what the Vice-President or some other "great name" spokesman, is going around saying. Try to imagine the appeal the name, "Karl Marx" invokes among the proletariat, in many "depressed areas" of the world, today.

3. *Example of social events.* As we think of social events, generally, and seek to learn the lesson from history of social change, we are to discount the tendency to confuse event and motion with change, necessarily. The appeal, therefore, is away from over-simplification, away from prime time given to external events per se. Rather, it is an urge to locate the source of the behavior underlying the event, even as an artist in seeking to draw the human form must study anatomy in order to succeed. We are primarily concerned with trying to find the patterns of change and anti-change that lay hidden in the non-historical realm.

C. Resistance to Directionality of Social Change

The two foregoing lessons from history have prepared us for a third which, briefly stated, proposes that resistance to social change is in fact resistance to directionality of social change. In discussing this lesson, we are reminded of the words of Talcott

¹³ LaPiere, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

Parsons, who sees "the direction of change in terms of several ends, all drawn from values which happen today to be central in Western society."¹⁴ In our analysis we will attempt to point out that today's values are an outgrowth of yesterday's values, and that an historical study of the resistance to these values is indeed an acceptable theme for our consideration.

From a broad spectrum of values which America claims to champion, we select the value of equality and justice for all and its reaction to it, for our discussion. As we do so we will hope to discover a logical continuum of change and anti-change, within this one value, during three periods of American history: during its beginnings, around the time of the first centennial, and finally during the twentieth century as we approach the second centennial.

1. *Social change during beginnings.* When we think of "Western society" we are reminded that ours is a blend from other cultures. This is particularly evident when we study the directionality of social change. "Civilization is everywhere the result of the stimulus evoked by the friction of one group upon another."¹⁵ R. R. Palmer in *Changes In Society*¹⁶ attempts to present a perspective on the era of unprecedented change of the last four decades of the eighteenth century by

¹⁴Nisbet, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

¹⁵Eugene and Fanchon Mead, *Man Among Men* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 357.

¹⁶Wilbert E. Moore, *Readings on Social Change* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 98ff.

linking the democratic revolution of America with other revolutions in Ireland (1798), Netherlands (1795), France (1792-1800), Swiss (1798), Milan (1798), Poland (1794), Greece (1797), and others. In referring to these revolutions he writes, "They arose everywhere out of local, genuine, and specific causes; or contrariwise, they reflected conditions that were universal throughout the western world."¹⁷ A case is thus presented for a continuum of the corporate liberties of peoples against superior authorities. The "democratic" movement in America was interrelated (causal) with those in other countries, "everywhere aimed against closed elites, self-selecting power groups, hereditary castes, and forms of special advantage or discrimination that no longer served any useful purpose."¹⁸

It is quite possible to "firm up" this lesson from the beginnings of American history and observe cause and effect from the point of view of sociological evolution. There was an accepted end that shaped men's lives and that end was the new sense of equality and justice for all. There were also forces of conservatism in the eighteenth century against which the revolution itself was a reaction. If equality was the end which stimulated and therefore became a cause of change, then inequality was both cause and obstacle to change. "Everywhere inequality is a cause of revolution," said Aristotle.

The historian, more recently, has attempted to emphasize the

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

growing conservatism or anti-change in the British Parliamentary circles prior to 1716.¹⁹ The sociologist would be concerned primarily with the embittered attitudes that resulted in the spilled tea in Boston harbor, and with the sense of injustice among the people which was reflected in the religion, the literature, the laws and the economic system of the times. It is difficult for one to agree, therefore, with Professor Nisbet when he says, "The conclusion one may properly draw is that, philosophers of history and social evolutionists to the contrary, long-run directionality tends to be in the beholder's eye, not in the materials themselves."²⁰

2. *Social change during first centennial.* As we think of those bitter years which immediately preceded the first centennial in America, some have described the Civil War as a continuum of the revolution of 1776. There was unfinished business in social change!

In forty years, from 1760 to 1800 equality took on a wealth of meanings, to which few new ones have been added since that time . . . It passed on to the extreme claim for an exact equality of material circumstances . . . feared by conservatives and expressed in Babeuf's blunt formula, 'stomachs are equal.'²¹

The historian would point out directionality of change in the industrial growth in the United States by describing the first centennial thus:

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁰Nisbet, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

²¹Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

On May 10, 1876 a gigantic throng of more than 100,000 people . . . swarmed into Fairmont Park, Philadelphia. The great Centennial Exposition was being opened by the President of the United States . . . The Corliss steam engine whose 1500 horses provided all the power needed for the Exposition, was turned on.²²

The sociologist, on the other hand, would look for behaviors, attitudes of peoples that were not on exhibition, and find causality in words such as expressed by Jonathan Lowell, the brother of James Russell Lowell:

Show 'em your Civil Service, and explain
How all men's loss is everybody's gain;
Show your new patents to increase your rents
By paying quarters for collecting cents;
Show your short cut to cure financial ills
By making paper-collars current bills;
Show your new bleaching process, cheap and brief,
To wit: a jury chosen by the thief;
Show your State Legislature, show your Rings;
And challenge Europe to produce such things
As high officials sitting half in sight
To share the plunder and to fix things right
If that don't fetch her, why, you only need
To show your latest style in martyrs--Tweed . . . ²³

During the last decades of the nineteenth century the United States reached a pace the world had not yet seen. The population of the great cities grew more than twice as fast as the country as a whole. In all of this one can see causality of change, and behind these changes was a revolution in transportation and communication, and in the process of production and distribution. Also behind these changes, beneficent to some, cataclysmic to others, there arose new, powerful

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 154.

forces of conservatism. The historian would note the directionality of big business, of the great fortunes of the Fields, the Armours, the Pillsburys, the Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers, or Andrew Carnegie's annual income of \$25,000,000. They would record the combinations of business into the world's first billion-dollar company, the United States Steel Corporation.

The sociologist would, on the other hand, look beneath the surface and observe directionality in the attitude of labor and of the farmer. He would show how every area of the social environment bore in upon the powerful businessmen in a new expression of the "end" of equality and justice. The sociologist would point out how the 1890's, rather than being the "gay '90s" of American prosperity were days of despair for 11,000,000 families (out of 12,500,000 families in the country) who had an average income of less than \$380 a year. Sociologists concerned with the continuum of equality and justice would see causality in the process of American society changing herself.

3. *Social change in twentieth century.* What shall we say of resistance to directionality of social change during the twentieth century? As the twentieth century dawned there were new voices heard from the pulpits of the land. These claimed that the Protestant ethic had too long been associated with the conservative rich who were either deaf to the pleas of the poor or simply became armchair liberationists for the victims of injustice and inequality. The right of neglected classes and races to be heard and to be free, was a very difficult thing for Christians to see even though there were strong theological

grounds. Gradually the churches began to oppose the same injustices that labor opposed, such as the 12-hour day imposed by the steel magnates. Voices of change and causality were heard by Washington Gladden, Lyman Abbott, George Herron and Walter Rauschenbusch.

These few leaders called the church to turn from its complacency and escapism to the social problems of industrialism, to fight the real powers of darkness, economic corruption in high places and grinding poverty in low.²⁴

They inspired, among other things, the formation of the Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches) in 1908, which stressed the ethical convictions of the social implications of the Gospel.

How may we look to the future in the light of our past? Where, on the scale of values, will we place equality and justice? There are many today, particularly the young intellectuals, who make naive, untutored prophecies concerning the "coming revolution" in our country. When such a prediction is approached scientifically, and on the basis of history and the causal association of elements, we should reflect on it with deep seriousness. Those with expertise in the social sciences, should challenge all thinking people, particularly those in the church.

For myself I find that a violent, internal revolution (Russian style, 1917) is incompatible with America's recent experience in the process of changing herself. LaPiere points out that the Russian

²⁴H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christian Ethics* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), p. 446.

revolution had one striking distinction to the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Russian (and, more recently, the Chinese) had peasant origins. "The leaders of the latter (18th and 19th centuries) were for the most part educated and sophisticated members of the middle class."²⁵ But this did not occur in the United States.

Neither Marxism nor Fabian socialism (named after Quintus Fabius Maximus, the Roman general who used nibbling tactics against the conquering Hannibal) acquired much of a following in the United States. For one thing, the comparatively high rates of change in this country during the latter half of the nineteenth century made any concerted and deliberate effort to produce changes seem redundant.²⁶

If this is to continue to be the case, resistance to change, which may be normal in society, must never become so rigidly organized on the side of injustice and inequality as to force a revolution to occur. Surely this is the challenge to educated and sophisticated members of the middle class!

D. Addendum: Aversion to Discuss Social Change

As an addendum to these lessons of history, we may properly ask, in our day, why there is such an aversion to discuss the subject of social change in responsible circles? "Just why modern American sociology so studiously ignores the phenomenon of social change is itself a rather interesting problem in social change."²⁷ Richard T.

²⁵ LaPiere, *op. cit.*, p. 533.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

LaPiere, professor of sociology at Stanford University, in his book, *Social Change*, presents a number of hypotheses: (1) nineteenth century evolutionists failed to produce testable concepts of social change, while putting their faith in progress through rational means (public school educational system á la Lester Ward); (2) America represents a new society with a short history; (3) American sociologists are "free floating intellectuals."²⁸

Then the author goes on to say:

It is the thesis of this book that the changes that occur within a society are asocial; that they are not in any sense a product of the society per se or a consequence of some universal and unvarying law of social life. Social change is not comparable to the changes that invariably occur through time in a living organism, to the normal changes that are involved in growth, maturity and decline. The changes that occur in society are, on the contrary, far more comparable to those violations of the normal organic processes that follow when, for reasons yet unknown, a cell goes wild--when it breaks from the 'laws' that control its growth and reproduction and multiplying disturbs the functioning of the entire organism.²⁹

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF ACCEPTORS AND REJECTORS

We now turn to a study of the characteristics of acceptors and rejectors of social change. According to LaPiere, every organization "is an organization inherently resistant to change" and "social change is the work of socially deviant individuals acting in asocial ways."³⁰ It is beyond the limits of this study to present a lengthy exegesis of

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁰*Ibid.*

LaPiere's thesis as he extends it beyond this passage. He does become exceedingly helpful to us as we consider the characteristics of the "acceptor" (advocate of innovation) and the "rejector."

A. Discussion of Generalities

As we are introduced to this subject let us make some generalities concerning acceptors and rejectors. LaPiere, in developing these characteristics, acknowledges the contribution of Homer Barnett's *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change*, even though Barnett incorporates a word of caution.

There is no category of acceptors as opposed to a category of rejectors. These terms cannot be used to impose a dichotomy upon humanity. They do not designate absolutes. . . . Other definitions of attitudes would do as well as the one proposed; so would some other appropriate nomenclature for them. The essentials, which are the biographical determinants that give rise to them would remain the same in any classification scheme.³¹

Notwithstanding the possibility of misappropriation we will attempt to define what we mean by an acceptor and a rejector. Acceptance, although tangential to our main concern, is a logical subject for our consideration. After all, in our personal biographies, they are never so fully developed that they do not have the possibility or actuality of resistance. A glass of water that is "half-full" may also be considered to be "half-empty!" In simplistic form an acceptor is a receiver of an innovator, donor, or carrier of an idea or thing. Barnett presents biographies of seven kinds of acceptors. These are

³¹Homer Barnett, *Innovation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953), pp. 380-381.

described in detail in Appendix A.

B. Characteristics Associated With Both Roles

If we are to hopefully minimize resistance to change, it is important to ask what factors are associated with both the acceptor and rejector roles. Whether one accepts or rejects change depends upon the framework of meaning within which experiences are placed. Do the presuppositions lead us to accept the new as important or possible, or unimportant and impossible? But "meaning" does not tell the whole story. How do we identify the main actors of acceptance or resistance? For example, the conservative acceptor described briefly in the appendix may, in relation to social change, be considered as resistor. The complexity of the problem may be highlighted by questions such as the following: Which individuals within a group, or which group within society will reject what others will accept? Why does the innovation appeal less to some and more to others? Why do people react differently to newness in the culture?

With this introduction, let us go beyond the basic factor of "meaning" to discuss the following characteristics associated with both roles: (1) prestige, (2) personality, (3) personal relations, (4) majority opinion (5) accepted value system, and (6) expediency.

LaPiere says, "Those individuals whose positions are secure and also carry comparatively high prestige tend to be socially conservative and resistant to change of any sort."³² Some individuals,

³²LaPiere, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

on the other hand become strong advocates of change, like the Duchess of Windsor, simply because they have a great deal of prestige in certain circles. The first missionaries to Korea made contact with the king and ruling class hoping to secure cooperation from influential people to gain acceptance of their mission. Others were martyred in their cause because of the opposition of the ruling group. Prestige is often a fickle factor. Syngman Rhee of Korea, for example, after first being welcomed by the Korean people as a liberator in the "independence movement," lost his prestige and was later rejected by many Koreans because of his occidental leanings. He acquired an Austrian wife and Western political thinking, which became objects of resistance by Korean political opponents.

Closely associated with prestige is the personality factor. An appealing personality is a major asset in securing acceptance for a product or idea, or for the rejection of the same. Many people buy things that they do not want simply because of the personality of an advocate. "High pressure" speeches have engaged many in spite of misrepresentation. By the same token, personality difficulties have disengaged acceptance from otherwise worthy causes. It is said of Pasteur, "There is no doubt that his offensive mannerisms inspired violent antagonisms toward his brilliant discoveries."³³

People will often become acceptors of ideas through the acquaintanship or recommendation of a friend, or reject if a stranger

³³Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

should oppose them.

The support of the majority is a valuable asset for the acceptor or the rejector. The majority use this acceptance lever to make it seem that those who resist are unreasonable or stubborn. "Research reveals that changing groups is often the most effective way of changing individuals. Persons are more likely to accept the opinions of groups in which they value membership."³⁴ The same may be said for the rejector, rejecting the opinions of groups of which he is not a member.

Closely associated with meaning is the factor of accepted value system. A different value system often depends on where emphasis lies--on the past or on the future, on order or process. For example, resisters operating by a moral principle that the new violates the old, say that, in order for the social system to survive, it is necessary to screen out the new. The Roman Catholic Church resists birth control on the ground that contraception violates the sanctity of life, and God's order is destroyed. Protestants, on the other hand, equally conscious of life and God's order, are future oriented and emerge as acceptors of contraception.

Resisters also maintain that the new violates a value system in aesthetics which has been well established. Yet each generation has resisted changes in music, art and architecture. Resisters and

³⁴Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Personal Growth and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 202.

acceptors alike share the responsibility and challenge of closing the generation gap which exists between adherents of two or more value systems in aesthetics, today.

Another factor which we attribute to either the acceptor or rejector role is that of expediency. It may generally be agreed that when "change is in the wind" as in a political election there may be more acceptors getting on the band-wagon. This does not mean that they have become acceptors-in-fact, or that they are at the mercy of social forces over which they have no control. Their behavior, momentarily, is one of joining forces with leaders.

C. Characteristics of Resistors

Since the characteristics of the resistor will emerge in larger detail, let us now only briefly focus on a relative placement of factors of resistance along the continuum by considering (1) conservatism, (2) fear of the unfamiliar and (3) rationalization.

"The actual basis for much of man's resistance to change, is the covert nonverbalization of responses (emotions, mood tones, feeling states, tastes, etc.) that have been acquired through socialization and that are in concordance with the various elements of the status quo."³⁵ This is another way of saying, "What was good enough for father is good enough for son and I'll be hanged if he'll change!" In the following chapter we will explore dramatic examples of conservatism

³⁵LaPiere, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

in resistance to social change.

Man is far more apt to accept the familiar and he is happy with it. Fear of the unknown, through history, has retarded exploration and growth. It is this fact, for example, which hampered Columbus's advocacy of a westward water route to the Orient and for keeping the African continent "dark" for so long.

Professors Seifert and Clinebell remind us that "Rational approaches that ignore emotional-attitudinal resistances are seldom effective. Insight emerges from reflection on what one is experiencing."³⁶ The real validity of social change becomes clouded by rationalization of a political, religious and philosophical bias. Much of rationalization stems from vested interests. Sects, and organizations are formed around some particular threat to the status quo. Thus the Ku-Klux Klan developed around the rationalization that the Negroes in the South must be intimidated, and organized in opposition to those who would give them status.

³⁶Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

CHAPTER II

SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS IN RESISTANCE

I. INTRODUCTION

We will continue our inquiry by introducing two points concerning the social factors in resistance. These should be appreciated before we proceed, for we are not simply laying down theory. If there were no message essential to the theory, it would have no place here.

A. Theory of Resistance Is Eclectic

An adequate theory of resistance must be eclectic including historical, socio-cultural, situational, psychological and other factors. These social factors are related to the personal factors to be considered in the next chapter. The personal and the social are always interrelated.

B. Theory of Resistance Includes Social Therapy

Social-action therapy, discussed in Chapter I of *Personal Growth and Social Change* by Seifert and Clinebell, is a creative method of resolving personal problems and "hang-ups" through involvement in social improvement, during a time of rapid change. "He who is not a pilot of change becomes its prisoner . . . Social action can be considered a therapeutic resource."¹ Having introduced individualism

¹Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Personal Growth*

and communitarianism, the authors go on to say, "To understand any situation in either individual growth or social change we must also understand the other aspect."² This enforces the "whole-world" or total theory of action and reaction.

It is significant that the discussion of unity projected in Chapter I of the aforementioned book, is followed by a discussion of "resistances." "Resistance is the compulsion to defend oneself against any change in one's adjustment. This exists simultaneously with the yearning to get well."³ The same can be said of groups. Resistance in society--in America--also exists simultaneously with a yearning to get well.

II. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

A. Desire To Get Well

Our first sociological factor in resistance to change is the desire to get well--to alter the defense against change in such a way as to bring about adjustment in the total situation of life. When life does not work out as planned or expected, the thwarting of original intention leads to aggression, alienation, resistance, etc.--the "making of a counter culture" in the words of Theodore Roszak.

and Social Change (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969) pp. 19-20.

²*Ibid.*, p. 31.

³*Ibid.*, p. 36.

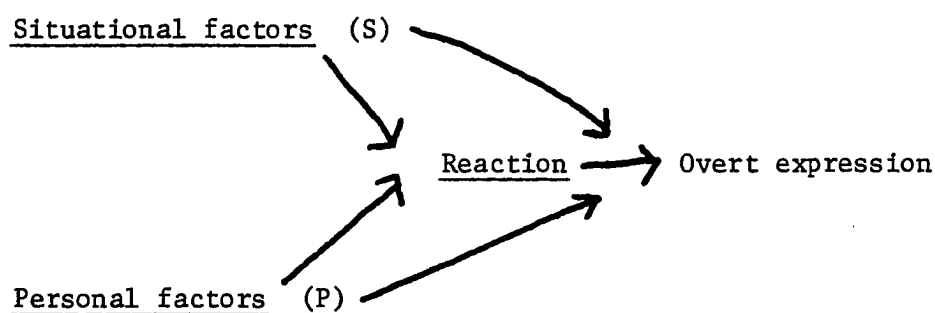
Gibson Winter deals at length with this problem. "To achieve methodological clarification, one is pressed back to a common ground in experience; this ground, in the present inquiry, is man's lived experience of the social world."⁴ He goes on to speak of the "working world in which we carry on our day-to-day affairs."⁵ He describes an ordinary bus ride, with our minds attentive to catching the bus, getting our fare paid, etc. Everything goes along normally without doubt or resistance until something happens to alter the situation: the motor fails, the bus is held up, the course is altered, etc. When these problems and alterations take place we begin to restructure our situation and make some changes. It is exceedingly important, when we theorize on the sociological factors which emerge when the practical breaks down, and resistances begin to express themselves, that we take time to ask "why?". We shall examine the problem from various points of view and try to arrive at some consensus for adjusted action. As far as the matter of the bus breaking down, next time we might take the taxi.

An excellent diagram will assist us at this point. It is from *The Church in The Way* by James E. Dittes.⁶

⁴Gibson Winter, *Elements for a Social Ethic* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 54.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶James E. Dittes, *The Church in The Way* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 26.



We will develop new meanings from this diagram, as we proceed in our study. Suffice it, now, to reinforce the first step in an understanding of the sociological factors in resistance.

B. Socio-Cultural Laws of Resistance

The second sociological factor is to consider the socio-cultural laws of resistance and to apply these to the situation in Middle America. We will attempt to do this by listing eight of the ten socio-cultural laws of prejudice suggested by Gordon Allport in the *Nature of Prejudice*.⁷ We will evaluate these, and rework them to make clear their meaning for resistance in general. Allport's remaining two "laws" are omitted as being directed more narrowly to inter-group prejudice.

1. *Heterogeneity*. In any homogeneous segment of society (i.e. "segregated") where people are alike, there is less resistance because there is less challenge. The conservative community likes to keep it that way. Heterogeneity leads to group conflict and the

⁷Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 215-223.

necessity of dealing with threatening novelty.

2. *Vertical mobility.* In a society which views people as "equal," where we recite freely, "with liberty and justice for all," members of even lowest groups are encouraged to rise to the top. Such vertical mobility becomes menacing to others and is therefore a factor in resistance.

3. *Rapid social change.* This process is speeded up in times of crisis. Anxiety increases as change is speeded up and life becomes less predictable. During times of rapid change there is more resistance.

4. *Ignorance and barriers to communication.* (Stereotyping) Scientific evidence has justified the assumption that prejudice increases with ignorance about the group rejected. It would seem to follow that resistance would increase with ignorance and with barriers to knowledge about a new situation.

5. *Direct competition and realistic conflict.* Resistance becomes greater as the feeling of threat increases. Threat may be illusory or exaggerated. It may also have a basis in fact. Group interests do differ and ideologies may conflict. Resistance may be protection of one's own social position.

6. *Exploitive advantage.* There is the "Marxian view that prejudice is fostered by capitalists in order to keep control over

the proletariat which they exploit."⁸ In ways more general than this, change may be resisted by exploiters who try to protect their own gains, by keeping lower groups in the social ladder "in their place."

7. *Social regulation of aggression.* In our culture a certain amount of open expression of hostility is allowable. In fact, it is recognized that a certain quantity of aggression must find an outlet in our society. But, is there a compulsive resistance in the social patterning of aggression, which leads to counter-resistance, or "back-lash"?

8. *Cultural devices to insure loyalty.* Every group builds loyalty by securing identification with a glorious past or with established habits. When these are attacked, the group may close ranks in greater cohesion.

C. Technology As Cause of Resistance

In order to expand the horizon of our thinking on resistance, and to update Allport's keen analysis of technology as a cause of resistance, I wish to introduce a brief discussion on the subject of technology. Let us imagine a battlefield in which the issue is ever-advancing technology with the contestants being, (1) those who own and operate the push-buttons for the purpose of technological change and (2) those who attempt to stop their use for the purpose of social

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 226.

change.

Because of modern technology we have "little revolutions" going on all over the place. Theodore Boszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture* describes how our youth, aided by the radical adult gurus, are rejecting the society of push-button contraptions of a passing generation. The elite, within their systems, resist the counter-culture!

How does technology thus breed resistance to social change? Because it produces a more complex situation, where change may be more widely threatening? Or does technology nurture an ethos of pragmatic decision, and a lack of appreciation for their values? Or does technology breed resistance because the affluence it produces leads to contentment and apathy?

Can we learn anything from the psychedelic communities and the "pseudo-Indian tribes" that camp in our cities in the hippie culture? Can the industrialist or politician ever hope to really feel the role of the hippie? Or vice versa? And what of the vast majority, silent or otherwise, caught in the middle on this technological problem? Are they resistors of change?

There is in man's nature a built-in resistance to change. It is not only that we are afraid of the new, but that deep within us there is the conviction that we cannot really change, that we cannot adapt ourselves to the new and remain our old selves, that only by getting out of our skins and assuming a new identity can we become part of the new. In other words, drastic change creates an estrangement from the self, and generates a need for a new birth and a new identity.⁹

⁹Eric Hoffer, *The Temper of Our Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 9-10.

III. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS APPLIED

Having considered the general cultural factors in resistance, our task is to apply these to the American scene today.

A. Example by Eric Hoffer

Eric Hoffer in his book, *The Temper of Our Times* projects the thesis that the central problem of our age is likened to the experience of juveniles. What does he propose by this analogy? Using Erik Erikson's category, he would say that we are in the "Fifth Stage of Man--of Identity diffusion." Sociologically speaking, "Juvenile" is a state of mind of "in-betweenness"--a time of drastic change--changes that may be preparing the ground for a revolution of mass migrations to the Promised Land. Hoffer concludes that the "end of the time of juveniles is nowhere in sight."¹⁰ This leads us to speak of the "battle of change."

B. Example of "Battle of Change"

The "battle of change" outlined for us in *Time* is nowhere in sight.¹¹ The article states, "The Middle Americans cherish, apprehensively, a system of values that they see assaulted and mocked everywhere. . . . This, they will say, is the greatest country in the

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹¹"Man and Woman of the Year: The Middle Americans," *Time* (January 5, 1970).

world. Why are people trying to tear it down?" To express themselves, they slap stickers on their car bumpers, "America--Love it or leave it."

The question is a good one. Why the situation of "againstness"? Why the attempt to derail the system? Let us seek an answer of the question from the point of view of the major contestants? Who are they?

On the one hand, there are those who resist change. Middle America pays most of the taxes, but has less and less say so as to how the money is spent. The middle class woman resists the assaults on the middle class standard of morality, on the breakdown of law and order, on the inflationary spiral of the cost of living. Seeking a scapegoat, she blames much of the nexus of change on the juveniles. The middle class male, according to the author, rejects less than the women. In fact, he says,

There is danger of oversimplifying both the loves and hates of Middle America. Despite all the evidence of a shift to the right, Middle America for years--certainly since the New Deal --has been part of the country's basic leftward trend, and still is. The Middle is located much farther toward the left today than it was a decade ago.¹²

Even the backlash against the blacks today, according to the author is not so much against the blacks per se as against black militancy and white intellectuals.

This leads us to say something about the acceptors of change. Who are they? According to the writer of the *Times*' article, the

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 11.

one's who are accepting change may be illustrated by: Yippie, Abbie Hoffman, as a symbol of all the radicals, "who pronounce the country ripe for destruction"¹³; Mark Rudd and other S.D.S. leaders; Eldridge Cleaver and Bobby Seals, called "individual villains" by Middle America; Black Panthers and all black militants and white students with adult intellectuals who join together in resisting university authority.

We will seek to elaborate ways in which Middle America illustrates the laws of change. For example, in referring to the eighth law, we might ask the question, How does a cultural device to insure loyalty, apply to government or to the church? In a concluding section of the article, "Man and Woman of the Year," entitled "To Assist, Not Resist," the author quotes *Time's* Washington Bureau Chief Hugh Sidney as saying,

I have the uneasy sensation that Nixon is riding the crest of a huge wave called Middle America, but he is reacting to it rather than leading it.¹⁴

And then the author makes the final summation:

If the U.S. is to go forward as Nixon has promised, Middle America must be led to *assist* change rather than resist it, to help shape the future rather than try to preserve an already vanishing America.¹⁵

The church in its attempt to insure loyalty needs to be cognizant of a prophetic participation in the battle within social change. The church condemns the ultimate in action which leads to violence, either from the right or the left. But it condemns indifference even

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

more. The social activists were commended by our Lord when He invited them to sit at His right hand in the Kingdom of Heaven. According to Matthew's story they did not even know Christ as such. "But when did we do all these things for you? When you did them for the least of these, you did them for me." (See Matt. 25:37-40)

Harry and Benaro Overstreet, in *The Strange Tactics of Extremism* speak to this law of change:

The extent to which American history can be told as a history of reform and social evolution, testifies to the fact that a *yeasty force* of Judaio-Christian conscience has been at work within us and among us.¹⁶

IV. FORCES EXERTED BY GROUPS IN SOCIETY

This leads us to elaborate on the process of socialization or human behavior brought about by those forces exerted by groups in society. As we discuss this at some length, we will, in fact, be combining all of the laws, but with particular reference to laws one, four and six. Indeed, resistance is an act of any opposing force. There are constructive and nonconstructive resistances to change. We will study these, using the model by Kurt Lewin, called "The Field Theory in Social Science."¹⁷

A. Field Theory: Kurt Lewin

Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) was primarily a psychologist, but his

¹⁶ Harry and Benaro Overstreet, *The Strange Tactics of Extremism* (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 155.

¹⁷ Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (New York: Harper

work extended to other fields. Much of his work concerned itself with the science of group behavior. Born in Germany, his professional life covered a span of about thirty years, and during that time he became the founder of group dynamics as a science. He is particularly useful to our purpose in this study, as he was able to bring about an orientation of psychology with sociology. He defines "Field Theory" thus:

It is probably best characterized as a method--namely, a method of analyzing causal relations and of building scientific constructs.¹⁸

Throughout the book he uses illustrations and geometric formulas, seeking to find the gestalt within the situation, "by seeking to approximate the truth by scientific analysis and excursions into the unknown."¹⁹

Since "field theory" has to do with the "whole life" of behavior, including action, thinking, wishing, striving, valuing, achieving, etc., in Chapter IX he devotes a section to "resistance to change." "The practical task of social management, as well as the scientific task of understanding the dynamics of group life, requires insight into the desire for resistance to, specific change."²⁰

In a critical analysis of the theory we discover that within this "total field" there are forces, and that these forces are subject to analysis, provided the facts of their existence are verified. These may be "observable facts" or "secondary derivations" such as the

& Row, 1951).

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, Preface

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 200.

resultant of forces.

Lewin makes the following notation of forces:

fp,g means a force acting on the person P in the direction toward g. fp-g indicates a force on P in the direction away from g. rfp,g is a restraining force against P's moving toward g. F*p,g means a resultant force which has the direction toward g. The strength of the force fp,g is indicated by (fp,g). . . . The reader should keep in mind, however, that if we say that a force . . . exists at a position (or a level) . . . we mean that a force is acting on a group in the position . . . or that it would act on the group if the group were in that position. The concept of force field refers to such potential positions.²¹

B. Analysis of Group Life: Discrimination

Using this preliminary information, let us endeavor to reconstruct the methodology of Lewin in the analysis of a problem of group life: *discrimination*. Influencing an all-white community (or church for that matter) means trying to break a well-established "custom" or "social habit." Social habits are usually conceived as obstacles to change. In spite of applying force, the level of social process will change less because of some type of "inner resistance" to change. According to Lewin's theory, "a successful change includes three aspects: unfreezing (if necessary) the present level, moving to the new level, and freezing the group life on the new level. Since any level is determined by a force field, permanency implies that the new force field is made relatively secure against change."²²

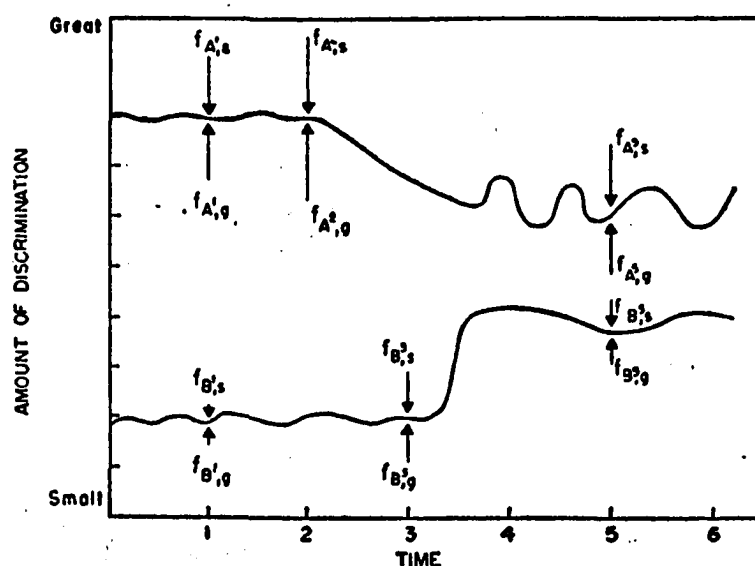
The "unfreezing" of resistance to change may involve a different

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 203.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

problem in each case. Allport seems to indicate that at times an invitation to "catharsis" may be necessary before prejudice (resistance) can be removed.²³ Churches need emotional "stir-ups," at times: In any case, the amount of change will be determined by the gradient of the counterforce. This presents the following principle by Lewin: "The greater the social value of a group standard the greater is the resistance of the individual group member to move away from this level."²⁴

We will chart the opposing forces in the level of discrimination in town A and B, as represented in Lewin (figure follows).²⁵ The purpose is to consider "the groups in question in their actual setting"²⁶ showing "level of equilibrium and strength of opposing forces"²⁷ keeping in mind the principle of resistance, stated above.



²³Allport, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-461.

²⁴Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 201.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

The *process* is to show "interaction between two populations."²⁸

Note that the ordinate indicates amount of discrimination; the abscissa indicates time.

fA1,s	- force in Town A, less discrimination (time 1)		
fA1,g	- force in Town A, greater	"	"
fB1,s	- force in Town B, less	"	"
fB1,g	- force in Town B, greater	"	"

Result: A is more discriminatory than B. Gradual decrease in A between 2 and 3. Sudden increase in B at time 3. In period 4-6 A shows relatively more fluctuation, B relatively little during same period.

Summary: The arrows indicate the degree of resistance, of forces toward or away from the state of affairs in a given situation. It is at such times that the opposing force may extend new pressure by tactics (even extreme tactics) or by modifying old methods.

V. REFERENCE GROUP THEORY

I am now turning to a discussion of reference group theory in relation to social change and anti-change.

A. Examples of Reference Groups

From Kurt Lewin we move to other authorities in a discussion of reference group theory in relation to social change and anti-change. According to Seifert and Clinebell, the "reference group as an object of change"²⁹ is used by social reformers, counselors, contemporary

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 202.

²⁹Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

educators and others. They refer, for example to a study that suggests,

It is not simply class position but also group influence that leads people to vote for the Labor Party in Great Britain. Manual workers are more likely to vote Labor if they live in predominantly working-class areas than if they live in heterogeneous neighborhoods. (p. 79)³⁰

This is true of both acceptors and resisters.

1. *Primary and secondary groups.* The common interest which is the basis of either group may, in turn, classify the group as primary or secondary. In a primary group, such as the family, the relationships are close and direct. In a secondary group, or derivative group, such as a community or sub-structure, the relationships are less intimate.

Stouffer and his associates in the American soldier studies discovered that motivation to fight was related more significantly to the expectations of a primary group than to hatred for the enemy of ideological goals of the war or coercion by military superiors. (p. 201)³¹

Seifert and Clinebell give other examples of the reference theory working in the urban culture: juvenile gangs, women who "looking at a display of dresses tends to see them as her group would." (p. 202)³² But, as we consider the populations of all modern countries, particularly the larger ones, we find a great complexity of groupings in which primary and secondary overlap and are constantly changing. In this changing order of things, and with a growing population, the opportunities of direct participation by many becomes less and less,

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

and the tendency, therefore, is for power to fall into the hands of a few.

Undifferentiated mass society, without organized groups standing between an atomized population and a central authority, is ripe for dictatorship. Kornhauser has shown how isolated men become alienated and anxious and therefore predisposed to extreme behavior.³³

Our discussion on "reference groups" has brought us to the place where it is necessary to describe in a general way the autocratic and democratic groups and to show the relationship of these groups to resistance.

2. *The autocratic group, historically first*, is considered first. An autocratic group, or authoritarian group, is one form of an association or clique brought into being to satisfy certain needs, wishes or interests of its members or tribe. Although all human society possess some system of government, in the authoritarian system from early times, the "chieftan" and his cohorts, emerged supreme. In Israel, authority was vested in the old men of the group, or the "elders." The current attempt in the nation's capitol to overthrow the "seniority system" is highly resisted by the "in-group," the senior senators. In these instances, and other similar situations one can detect certain characteristics of the authoritarian group. I shall now attempt to describe these characteristics and indicate their relationship to resistance in social change.

³³*Ibid.*

a. *Highly egocentric.* The autocratic group is highly egocentric. According to Seifert, "The locus of decision-making is in the leader himself, on the presumption that he knows best what the group ought to do."³⁴ Thus, the group following an autocratic leader and less concerned with creativity and exploring issues, can become more resistant to change.

I would react favorably with the thought expressed by Seifert and Clinebell, "Authoritarian leaders make strange bedfellows. Here one finds political dictators as well as authoritarian bishops."³⁵ I also agree that people in positions of leadership and influence, such as ministers and teachers, may also gather a group which is highly egocentric about them.

Benevolent autocracy has a peculiar temptation to those persons, such as ministers, who feel a high calling from God and are accustomed to speaking ex cathedra in order to 'straighten out' the 'wrong' ideas of their hearers. Their charisma is based on a coercive, hypnotic force associated with high prestige that leads people to do things even against their will or better judgments.³⁶

b. *Ethnocentric.* The autocratic group is also ethnocentric. This is a concept contributed by Sumner. According to Sumner, the assumption or conviction of the autocratic group is that the values, ways of life, the whole culture of one's group are superior to those of others. They may be the only right ones!

To some extent every nation almost invariably refers to itself in flattering terms, as accomplishing most, in short as a chosen

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

people. But, in exaggerated forms of this feeling, within the group, we find the making of sects, cults, group antagonisms and prejudices. When groups overrate their own importance and place others on a lower scale they obscure progress. Indeed, they make gods of their own mores and set up barriers to mutual understanding and peaceful cooperation. They become coercive in their method, contemptuous of others in their differences and resisters of social change. In our society there are major forms of renewal within Christianity and the democratic form of government which are still strongly resisted. Samuel Koenig quotes Ogburn and Nimkoff by saying, "It is a curious phenomenon, that some of the greatest blessings of the human race should have been bitterly resisted. . . . It is as though there were enemies within the gates; as though many of us did not want to increase our blessings."³⁷

3. *The democratic group.* The democratic group, in contrast to the autocratic which is "ego-centric" using "I" and "we," is "non ego-centric" using "them" and "they."

a. *Non ego-centric.* It makes more use of the leadership of the group. The comparatively recent development of the democratic group process, like democracy in a nation, has grown out of modern conditions and needs. The initiatives of democratic leaders have decreased as group members have tended to become more cooperative and self-reliant.

³⁷Samuel Koenig, *Sociology* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1957), p. 299.

During times of rapid social change the democratic groups are less resistant to social invention than the autocratic. They are more inclined toward a step-by-step method of change and a gradual acceptance of a situation involving change. "Furthermore, compared with a less advanced society, a technologically conscious society is more receptive to change, particularly in the material sphere."³⁸

The democratic group can indirectly cause resistance to take place, as illustrated by Seifert and Clinebell.

Bavelas and Strauss report on a new process for painting wooden toys that ran into employee resistance. The workers were called together for a discussion of general working conditions. The girls finally asked that they be allowed to adjust the speed of the conveyor belt depending on how they felt at various times during the day. The outcome was that they actually set their average considerably above what had been expected, and on the prevailing bonus system they began earning so much that other workers in the plant objected.³⁹

b. *More open to multi-groupings.* The democratic group is less inclined to become ethnocentric and more open to multi-groupings and multi-suggestions. Referring to Sumner's distinction between "in-groups" and "out-groups," the democratic group is an "out-group." Rather than being suspicious, contemptuous and hostile toward other groups, they "exhibit more teamwork, higher morale, and greater acceptance of responsibilities."⁴⁰

3. *Conclusion.* The importance of *going beyond* this discussion

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 297.

³⁹Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

of the characteristics of the autocratic and democratic groups *to practice* cannot be overemphasized. Although the application in the witness of the church is reserved for Chapter IV, a caution can be expressed here. The minister can refuse to play the "expert" role, the parent-child dependency role, the autocratic role and thus enable the members to work through the log-jam of resistances, such as the resistance to social change.

It is much too simple an explanation to attribute all church quarrels to autocratic leadership. There seems to be sufficient evidence, however, to suggest that such domination does contribute to friction. The brotherly cooperation which ought to characterize the Christian fellowship at its best is nurtured most effectively under democratic leadership.⁴¹

A warning-note should also be sounded of the possibility of the democratic group drifting to either a laissez-faire position or to an autocratic way of doing things. The following possibilities suggested by Seifert and Clinebell, may in fact, increase resistance to social change.⁴² (1) There may be a latent "love of power." (2) The tendency to present detailed agenda and plans to a group before discussion has taken place may increase resistance. (3) Resistance may result from a manipulation of the machinery of democracy to secure desired ends. (4) Using undesirable propaganda may be an autocratic tool, increasing resistance. Within the context of our next discussion, we will have an opportunity to expand on some of these pitfalls in resistance to social change.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 152.

VI. EXTREMISM AND COORDINATES

I will now discuss extremism and a few of the coordinates (propaganda and mass media), a subject which has grown to large proportions in the current American crisis. I do so, not to add to the idea mart on extremism, but rather to place it properly in the spectrum of the resistance to social change. I propose to discuss the subject by answering some basic questions: What is extremism? How has the radical right grown in America? What are some of the ways in which extremism of the radical right intensifies the problem of resistance to social change? How is propaganda and mass media considered a dangerous force in the hands of the radical right wing?

A. Definitions of Extremism

Since there are so many personal opinions concerning extremism, we will attempt partial definitions in order to arrive at some consensus. Our religion is so comingled with all of the habits of the American people and nation, that we get caught up with the pro and con of any discussion of patriotism and national welfare. Since any discussion of extremism involves the American political society at a particular moment in history, definitions keep shifting.

1. *Extremism: nomenclature.* A starting point is to refer to Webster's Dictionary which defines "extreme" as "something situated at or marking one end or the other of a range." For example, in polar regions, we speak of "extreme cold"; in sociology, we speak of "extreme

poverty." In going to exaggerated lengths on a subject, we speak of "uncompromising, radical, fanatical or excessive."

In the nomenclature of political extremism to the right, we refer to "rightist, right wing, radical right, conservative or ultra-conservative." From these labels, I have selected the "radical right" as being the most accurate representation of the extreme right position.

2. *Reasons for selecting "radical right."* I have selected the "radical right" for discussion rather than the "radical left" or Communism, because it is an "indigenous movement," in the words of Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, who go on to say, it is "not a part of an international conspiracy. Its roots are here; not abroad. Thus, it can best be understood, in many of its aspects, as an nth-degree exaggeration of traits common among us in many gradations."⁴³

Furthermore, in the dynamics of this dissertation, which seeks to highlight the resistance to social change, we are discovering that the radical right answer is becoming very attractive in our churches. Since we feel the same political and social threats within the church, rigidity and resistance in one area, creates an answering rigidity and resistance in another.

There is not really much danger, I think, that many of our people will be victimized by this Manichean-style theology. (Extremism here is considered as a modern-day prototype

⁴³Overstreet, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

of the first century gnostic heresy.) The crucial danger of the radical right is that its threat will bring out the extremist in ourselves.⁴⁴

According to Wayne Oates in *Pastoral Counseling in Social Problems*, "he makes an important reminder that an extremist is not 'some kind of nut,' but that the psychological materials for an extremist response exist in us all."⁴⁵

B. Growth of Radical Right in America

I wish to present here (with additional material in the Appendix) a brief description of the rise of the radical right position in America to show how the resistance to social change became part of its "life style." For this purpose, I have selected material from an article by Jerald C. Brauer entitled "Right Wing Redivivus" in the *Criterion*.⁴⁶

1. *Alien and sedition acts.* J. C. Brauer reminds us that the roots of the radical right go deep into our history. As an example, the author points out that the Alien and Sedition Acts of the late eighteenth century, which were directed against the immigration from the Old World were supported by the churches, who provided much of the leadership of the rightest movement.

From the Civil War on, anti-immigration societies sprang up

⁴⁴Peter Beckman, "The Church on the Right Wing," *Lutheran Quarterly*, XIX:1 (February 1967), 103.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁶Jerald C. Brauer, "Right Wing Redivivus," *Criterion*, III

constantly.

Immigrants were always suspect because somehow it was feared that they would not understand American customs and mores; therefore it was feared that they would change American life and ultimately subvert its political institutions.⁴⁷

This aspect of resistance to social change became a rigid element of the right-wing, so that one immigrant group after another became the target of discrimination and suspicion.

2. *The early nineteenth century.* During the early part of this century, right-wing outbreaks were directed against the Masonic Movement, Roman Catholicism and the leading Protestant denominations, for the same reason of anti-change. As responsible churches, particularly those members of the National Council of Churches as the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, brought the Gospel to bear critically upon American life and society, they found themselves under attack by the right-wing extremists.

The radical right said that the church had no business employing the Gospel as a critique or a bulwark of American society. The church was highly resisted by the right fringe and accused of being unfaithful to the Gospel.

3. *Today.* The fact that Protestantism is actually doing something about social change infuriates the right-wing extremists. These attacks are from the Protestant fundamentalists and by a large

(Winter 1964), 17-22.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

number of laymen within Middle America Protestant churches.

4. *Conclusion.* In this brief over-view of the growth of the radical right in America there is danger of oversimplification and of being too ecclesiastical in the approach. But, in a nation seeking to get well, it is not possible to exclude the right-wing attack on the Protestant denominations. "The very fact that they are now under attack is fairly good evidence that they are seeking to fulfill the role they ought to play in American society."⁴⁸

C. Intensification of the Problem of Resistance

The foregoing discussion has brought us to some very serious considerations concerning the intensification of the resistance to social change which reaches into the social-psychological milieu of the problem.

1. *The radical right is more dangerous.* During the past, the radical right was dangerous enough, but the wide-open spaces of America diffused the tensions which resulted from their attacks. The immigrants could just move on. Millions of people were thus absorbed into the body politic. It was not until the turn of the century that the geographical frontier disappeared from the American scene. Today, Americans do not have this unlimited space in which they can find refuge. The right wing is broken by the increasing population constantly

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 21.

dotted with minority groups in their vertical mobility. The enemy does not turn over and die! They press in on middle America. For the first time in history the radical right is truly confined. In his frustration he becomes more vocal and raucous. He becomes more rigid. "On any important issue, extremists are not likely to change."⁴⁹

2. *The tactics of the radical right* compound the problem of needed change. The strongest force binding the extremists together is in the area of tactics. Harry and Bonaro Overstreet believe that "it is in the area of tactics and stratagems that extremists, of Left or Right, most clearly show where the line is drawn between themselves and those who occupy the moderate center."⁵⁰

In listing these tactics, Seifert and Clinebell include "fomenting disorder, wearing down opponents, creating divisions, confusing issues, building up or tearing down reputations, infiltrating organizations, and taking over legitimate protests."⁵¹

3. *The radical right resists basic freedom.* The fanatic forms of devotion to patriotism are often just an attempt to give meaning to their frustrated lives. Since the radical right never trusted democracy from the days of the immigration acts, it still does not.

⁴⁹Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁵⁰Overstreet, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁵¹Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

Extremists undermine freedom of speech by the very methods they use allegedly to preserve liberty. They obstruct change and thereby contribute to social breakdown, which plays into the hands of totalitarianism. By irresponsible attacks they undermine major institutions like the church, which are among our chief bulwarks against totalitarianism.⁵²

The "patriotism" of the right wing extremists may, in fact be un-American. As in the case of the Book of Jonah, patriotism can sometimes be a smokescreen for greed, pride and arrogance--characteristics of the autocratic group.

D. The Dangerous Force of Propaganda and Mass Media

A discussion of extremism must eventually include an additional comment on the means of communication. And since this communication is usually negative in its approach, it becomes a logical part of the study on resistance to social change. The particular problem, now, is that the right wing has vast sums of money behind it which it uses with destructive force.

1. *Mass Media.* It is beyond the scope of this study to catalogue the vast amount of mass media which has been exerted by opinion leaders of the radical right. "It is a kind of double play from mass media to opinion leaders to population."⁵³ The reader may turn to the Appendix where he will find extrapolated a partial listing from the book by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, *The Strange Tactics of Extremism*.

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 200.

What are the defenses against mass media and thought manipulation on television when "half the U. S. population is watching T.V. on a typical evening"?⁵⁴ According to Allport it is the pyramiding-stimulation of communication which is most effective and especially "when there are no deep seated resistances."⁵⁵ Unless one is perceptive, television programs, including news, sponsored by the "rightest" elements and tubed into the peaceful security of one's home, designed to manipulate, may become sources of indoctrination in the long run. In a time of rapid social change this is particularly disastrous.

2. *Propaganda.* Propaganda is the spreading of ideas, information or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, cause or person. Thus, we propagate the faith. But propaganda is also a significant factor in spreading resistance to social change by the forces of the radical right. But when the means become so destructive of personal values as to outweigh any desirable outcomes they must be rejected.

Propaganda which is used by the radical right, as in any autocratic group, has the tendency to pile up arguments on one side of an issue. Consequently it fails to be empirical, scientific, weighing all the facts of an issue. The result is an emotional "stampeding decision without adequate consideration of the evidence."⁵⁶

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵⁵Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 458.

⁵⁶Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

We select one excerpt from the *Christian Nationalist*, an extremist publication. In speaking of a meeting in 1948, it says:

We've gathered together from the corners of America for the sole purpose of taking steps necessary to beat back the wave of materialism, the tidal waves of the evil force that threatens to engulf our beloved nation, the United States of America. We have assembled under the banner of Jesus Christ and the banner of our American Republic, the Cross and the flag, to demonstrate to the international financiers of Wall Street, the international Communists of Moscow and the international Jewish terrorists throughout the world that they have failed. The political party that we are creating is a monument to the fact that *resistance* to evil, *resistance* to slavery, *resistance* to godless Communism still lives in the world.

In searching the platforms of the old political parties for a solution to the problems of international Jewish conspiracy, and the problem of Communist Jewish treason, and the problem of Zionist Jewish terrorism, the only words we found was a wailing cry of sympathy because of the work that the old political parties had done in creating the so-called Jewish state of Palestine.

.....

It's the purpose of the Christian Nationalist Party to outlaw the Communist Party in America . . . Now all of these people that are being exposed in Washington were students of Felix Frankfurter. . . and he sits on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Now we're not demogogic about the Negro problem. We're going to speak the truth, we're going to speak what we believe, we're going to speak what is the only solution of the problem of black and white mixture in the United States. We advocate a Constitutional amendment making segregation of the black and white races a law of the United States of America. . . .⁵⁷

From propaganda, such as this, we observe that the radical right extremists are extremely nervous about change and therefore resist change by attacking the "change agents" whoever they may be. We can no longer afford to be silent concerning extremism. Is it

⁵⁷ Allport, *op. cit.*, pp. 385-387.

possible for us, in the light of the unreasoned resistance to social change, from the extreme right or the left, to come to our senses? In the words of Corita Kent (formerly Sister Corita), an artist is somebody who isn't nervous about change.

E. Conclusion

We have attempted to describe the sociological factors in resistance. We have attempted to carry out the project by illustration, as well as by analysis of related studies. We have attempted to dramatize the fact that the social factors in resistance present a moving target. The dynamics of relationships between society, the individual and reference groups is an observable force. We will continue our study by observing the personal, psychological factors in the resistance to social change.

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN RESISTANCE

I. BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

In order to guide us as change agents in our task, we need a brief orientation of the behavioral sciences. According to Conrad Arensberg and Arthur Niehoff, these include¹:

A. Anthropology

In this field, we mention in particular, the division known as cultural anthropology, in which we study the different peoples and cultures of the world with respect to their total way of life.

B. Sociology

In sociology we study the forms and processes of group life and social relationships, both statistically and through the analysis of institutions. Some, like Sumner and Keller, preferred to call the subject, "the science of society," rather than "sociology."

C. Psychology

Social psychology is that branch of psychology, in which we

¹Conrad M. Arensberg and Arthur H. Niehoff, *Introducing Social Change* (Chicago: Aldine, 1964), p. 9.

study the nature, role, learning process, and capabilities of human beings in group life, together with the effects in behavior and attitude resulting from the individual's group membership.

The problem of resistance to social change, we have come to realize, cannot be found in a simple explanation. The problem is so interwoven with other problems in society that it cannot be explained or solved apart from them. In other words, resistance to social change can be dealt with effectively only when it is considered in the complex totality or configuration. The idea of Gestalt school of psychology regarding the behavior of the individual that requires an understanding of the total situation, applies to social problems, as well.

Consequently, in the first chapter, in order to understand what is going on in the rejection of social change, we studied some basic lessons of history that shape our lives and the meaning of "acceptor" and "resistor." We went on to discuss sociological, and to some extent anthropological factors in Chapter II. In this chapter I will focus on the psychological factors in the resistance to social change.

In addition to social forces, there are always reacting and innovating individuals.

Change is usually resisted. Even minor changes of things people hold important are strongly resisted. Yet change can be introduced to both self and society when our usual understanding of events and situations is called into question. We have already suggested that historical events do not just happen. Events happen and are interpreted within some meaningful and usually nondoubted context.²

²Robert W. Terry, *For Whites Only* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 26.

Any description of these psychological aspects would have to cover three focal points: attitude, behavior, and consciousness. By referring back to the section in Chapter II, the "thwarting of original intention," we asked the question, "What happens psychologically when the change factor as obstacle presents itself?" We will attempt to answer this question, in relation to what many call America's number one problem, "the white attitude system."

II. THE WHITE ATTITUDE SYSTEM

A. Introduction

There is a broad field of psychological resistance in America in the area of race relations and social justice. This takes on various forms and has a varied nomenclature. In this introduction, definitions will be suggested and an historical base (religious and cultural) found for prejudice.

1. *Definitions.* In the literature of race relations a number of words are used, such as racism, ethnocentrism, "whitey and black power," and the white attitude system. Ethnocentrism was defined for us in the last chapter. Racism has been defined by Edwin R. Edmonds, Pastor, Broadway Church, New York as "a dogma that presumes that by heredity certain races are superior and others inferior, and that racial purity is therefore demanded of the superior."³

³ A Colloquy by five United Church of Christ ministers: "Can the Church Deal with Racism?" *Social Action*, XXXVI (December 1970), 4.

Edmonds goes on to define institutional racism as a system that "has built into it discriminatory treatment and blockages to free-flowing human interaction so that, no matter who we are, we still are victimized by the system of which we are a part."⁴

This leads us to speak of the white attitude system. The way things are manipulated psychologically, within the institutional and cultural structure, somehow works in favor of white people and against minorities. The so-called 1968 Kerner Report (from the Chairman, Otto Kerner) of the National Commission on Civil Disorder speaks of the white attitude system thus:

This is our basic conclusion: Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of the American life; they now threaten the future of every American. This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principle task is to define that choice and to press for a national resolution.

To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.

The alternative is not blind repression or capitulation to lawlessness. It is the realization of common opportunities for all within a single society.

The alternative will require a commitment to national action--compassion, massive, and sustained, backed by the resources of the most powerful and richest nation on this earth. From every American it will *require new attitudes*, new understanding, and above all, new will.

Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans. What white Americans have never fully understood--but what the

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 7.

Negro can never forget--is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.⁵

The term, white attitude system, is not completely adequate.

"The term white, incidently, is one of the worst descriptive terms ever devised, since no group of people or individuals are truly white in color."⁶ As we shall see, "attitude" is only one of several factors to be considered. And "system" as an interaction of persons and ideas, principles and organization to form a concrete whole, should not be single, but plural. There are unlimited combinations of white attitude systems, binary, tenary, etc.

2. *Historical base for prejudice.* At this point, I refer to the diagram by James Dittes on page 29. The diagram illustrates the situational and personal factors which result in the overt expression, in this case--the white attitude system. As we consider this alignment of the cultural and personal we have this strange paradox. There has always been something about religion that makes for prejudice. At the same time, there is something about religion that makes for unprejudice. Resistance to social change and anti-resistance to social change, go hand-in-hand in the church. It is this strange paradox, an aspect of the white attitude system, which I wish to explore by a brief discussion of the historical base.

⁵ National Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 1.

⁶ Arensberg, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

a. *An illustration from the Bible.* The following are the words quoted by Jesus from Isaiah in his address in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:8)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news
to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at
liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim
the acceptable year of the Lord.

This passage states the priority of Jesus' ministry. But then, at the end of His message, he went on to touch a tender nerve, in the minds and hearts of the hearers. This is what He said:

And there were many lepers in Israel in the time
of the prophet Elisha and none of them were
cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

This was too much for their racism, and Luke tells us what happened:

When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath, and they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.

Thus, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, His challenge to the society's ethnocentrism, of their resistance to change, became a cause of conflict between him and the authorities of the synagogue.

b. *The paradox of history.* Gordon W. Allport, in an article "The Religious Context of Prejudice" lists an array of spiritual heroes down through history who have been motivated to battle for civil rights and social justice from Tertullian to Martin Luther King. Then, he says, "All this evidence is convincing, but it does not cancel the

fact that members of Christian churches in this country are on the average more bigoted than nonchurchgoers."⁷

Since the evidence is incontestable on both sides it is certain that we are confronted by a paradoxical situation in the white attitude system, which requires our study, and inquiry.

One year after the Kerner Report, Ralph D. Abernathy published a document entitled *One Year Later*. He asked the question if the Report would be remembered by historians and scholars as merely a major document, or as a call to national action? Then, he went on to list other documents in our history and to comment on them.

In quoting the Declaration of Independence, he said "millions of poor people are in fact denied their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."⁸ He pointed out that the same Constitution (March 4, 1787) which specifically stated an intention to establish justice, and liberty for all, "upheld slavery and condemned my people to a life of injustice, insecurity and bondage."⁹ In 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. "The promise was to end slavery, but what was the reality?" asked Abernathy, "Only the slaves in parts of the South unoccupied by Northern troops were set free, as a military strategy to disrupt the Confederacy."¹⁰

⁷Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, V:3 (Fall 1966), 448.

⁸Ralph D. Abernathy, "One Year Later," *Renewal*, IX:4 (April 1969), 10.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*

Reinhold Niebuhr, in commenting on this, said:

The chief defect of an idealistic conception of emancipation was that the freed slaves were given no livelihood in land ownership nor opportunity to exercise a craft. The same government which passed the Homestead Act and settled white farmers on the frontier with free land gave no land to the poor ex-slave. They were reduced to the status of debt-ridden sharecroppers on their former plantations.¹¹

Niebuhr goes on to quote the President's 1967 National Advisory Commission Report which says, "By the 20th Century the Negro was at the bottom of American society." This is the white attitude system!

As we project this paradox of history into the future, we are faced with individual responsibility in dealing with prejudice.

We shall now seek to examine the meaning of prejudice.

B. Meaning of Prejudice

The very fact that we are now dealing with the personal, psychological factors of resistance to social change demonstrates that the sociocultural arguments which have been presented in the preceding chapter are not sufficient. We cannot overlook the heart of the matter of personal prejudice.

Before entering on our analysis, we should pause and ask ourselves as to what we mean by prejudice. Thomistic philosophy defines prejudice very simply, as "thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant." Webster says essentially the same thing when he defines prejudice as "injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action

¹¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Negro Minority and Its Fate in a Self-Righteous Nation," *McCormick Quarterly*, XXII:4 (May 1969), 204.

of another in disregard of one's rights." Since prejudice often leads to segregation, discrimination and denial of rights, it is a departure from the norm of justice and equality.

Prejudice, therefore, leads to a study of attitudes that are interlocked with a person's religious and cultural life. The problem of prejudice in relation to the white attitude system becomes exceedingly complex, because I am writing as a white person. In relation to prejudice, how does a white person know if he is ill or normal? How does a black person know? How can a person know if he is hurting or resisting? How can he know if he really desires to get well?

Concerning the social deliverances of the 178th General Assembly (1966) of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. meeting at Boston, Massachusetts, the following statements were made in a Progress Report:

The vast majority of nonwhite Christians still remain separated if not estranged from their brothers in Christ. The word that the church must continue to speak to Americans concerning the racism that lodges in the heart of every one of us is, 'Change, or take the consequences that history sooner or later casts upon folly.'¹²

How can one speak at all of the white attitude system, unless he takes some kind of test or has been through some kind of fire?

The test I am recommending is called "The Misery of Blackness." The test is a condensation of "Black Misery" by Langston Hughes and

¹²"Civil Rights and the Church," *Social Progress*, LVI:6 (July-August 1966), 22.

"Black Is" by Turner Brown, Jr. So, let us put a thermometer in the mouth and see how sick we really are?

Misery is when you start
to play a game and someone
begins to count out
Eenie, meenie, minie, mo . . .

Black is
learning at an early age that
equality is only skin-deep.

Misery is when you heard
on the radio that the neighborhood
you live in is a slum but
you always thought it was home.

Black is being mayor
in the city
and banned in the suburbs.

Misery is when the taxicab
won't stop for your mother
and she says a bad word.

Black is when you root
for the Indians to
beat John Wayne.

Misery is when you start to help
an old white lady across the street
and she thinks
you're trying to snatch her purse.¹³

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN RESISTANCE

Keeping in mind the discussion of behavioral sciences and the situation of the white attitude system, we will now turn to the psychological factors in resistance to social change. They are

¹³ From Langston Hughes, *Black Misery* (New York: Erikson, 1969), and Turner Brown, Jr., *Black Is* (New York: Grove Press, 1969), Condensed in *Reader's Digest*, 95:571 (November 1969), 131.

attitude, behavior and consciousness, or the "a, b, c," of psychological factors. Briefly defined and contrasted, an attitude is how a man thinks; behavior is what a man does; consciousness is a person's awareness of self in relation to others and things around him.

A. Attitude

Let us say that the attitudes point to two options. One option is the acceptance of social change. If the setting were a church group, we would call it healthy indicating either acceptance or accommodation to social change. The church is credited with a progressive orientation when their attitude is one of acceptance. The members seriously try to carry over their religion into all their other dealings. We will speak of this again in the final chapter, the witness of the church. The other option reveals an attitude of resistance to social change. It is this attitude which I am dealing with in this chapter. It is the attitude which tends to legitimize the continuing white supremacy in race relations. In spite of massive evidence and pressures for change, such as changing neighborhood, the attitude resists any suggestions of the change of the status quo. It is the attitude of defense. It is something like the attitude a parent might have for a child, psychologically supporting a child against teachers at school even when the child has done wrong.

This attitude of resistance, whether it is in connection with the white attitude system or in interpersonal relationships, requires analysis. "Analysis of resistance is an essential part of . . .

therapy."¹⁴ Seifert and Clinebell point out that "Psychoanalysis has explored resistances to change in more depth than any other system of therapy."¹⁵ They quote Karl Menninger as saying that "Resistance" is "the rend of forces within the patient which oppose the process of ameliorative change."¹⁶

As we proceed with an analysis of the attitude factor of the resistance to social change, it will be helpful to discuss the meaning of scapegoating, displacement and stereotyping with supporting illustrations. Let us ask ourselves why there are these attitudes in our culture, and particularly so in the white attitude system?

1. *Scapegoating*. The meaning comes from Le. 16:20-22. On the Day of Atonement, a live goat was chosen by lot. The high priest, laying his hands on the goat's head confessed the sins of the people of Israel. The sins were symbolically transferred to the beast and it was taken out into the wilderness. The people were to feel purged. The psychological processes of scapegoating within the white attitude system are more complex. Allport states, "It assumes a large amount of unconscious mental operation in the individual. . . . Why some minorities are liked or overlooked while others are hated remains wholly unexplained."¹⁷

¹⁴Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Personal Growth and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 36.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 331-332.

2. *Displacement.* Displacement is an attitude of reaction to psychological frustration and aggression. It may be illustrated by the expression, "Take it out on the dog; don't take it out on me!" According to Allport, we find more instances of displacement in the white attitude system during times of war than in times of peace.

Wartime is also a breeding time for domestic hostilities . . . wars saddle the populace with all manner of new frustrations: rationing, taxes, apprehension, casualties. The net result is increased domestic friction. In the year 1943, the most serious period of the war for the United States, four of the six largest cities in the United States had disastrous race riots.¹⁸

3. *Stereotyping.* "A stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category (i.e. Jew, Negro, etc.). Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category."¹⁹ Bettelheim and Janowitz both point out that the Negro reflects our own "id" impulses; and that we personify by stereotypes our own dissatisfaction with the evil in our own nature.

With this preliminary explanation of irrational attitudes we may refer to any combination of them in the white attitude system as a syndrome. "Original sin manifests itself partly in ego-centered resistance to change."²⁰ How shall we describe this syndrome? It is like the complete blindness of white eyes to look into the black man's soul and know how he feels. Richard Wright points out that this syndrome has global dimensions.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²⁰ Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

The scope and intensity of this Asian-African and Negro acting depend on the degree of white hostility that they confront. In America, this acting is a perfected system: it is impossible for the white man to determine just what a Negro is really feeling, unless that white man . . . is gifted with a superb imagination.²¹

It is the purpose of this discussion to relate the psychological factor of attitude and syndrome to resistance of social change. A number of illustrations may indicate how slow we are to change, psychologically, within our culture. A depressing example of prejudicial attitude comes from this statement of one teacher to a group of parents visiting her class in New York City. She spoke to the white parents concerning children of minorities in a belittling manner. "Heredity is what really counts, and since they don't have a high culture in Africa and have not yet built one in New York, they are intellectually inferior from birth."²²

In the anatomy of the white attitude system there is no respector of institutions, and so we must include the church. "The most obvious manifestation of the church's sin would be the persistence of prejudice among Christians"²³ says Joseph Hough in *Black Power and White Protestantism*. "The members of the churches are beset with the same forms of prejudice that constitute a major problem for race

²¹Richard Wright, *White Man Listen*: (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 18.

²²Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Vintage, 1964), p. 261.

²³Joseph C. Hough, Jr., *Black Power and White Protestants* (New York, London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 178.

relations in the wider American society."²⁴

Two University of California sociologists, Professors Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark have concluded a five year analysis of prejudice and church belief in the United States. They found that, while 75 to 90 per cent of Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders and clergy are working actively against racial discrimination, the majority of church members are not only prejudiced but also deny the right of the churches to challenge their prejudices. The traditional Christian image of man prompts such people to blame the miseries of the disadvantaged on their own shortcomings. Catholics are a little less prejudiced than Protestants and liberal Protestants are less prejudiced than conservative Protestants. The sociologists emphasize that a "great many devout Christians do accept their churches' ethical preachments and are trying to fight prejudice, but when the whole range of Christians is examined, ethical commitment is, seemingly not the typical product of religious devotion."²⁵

Perhaps we are anticipating the discussion on behavior when we ask the question, "Can a practicing religion or faith accompany a prejudicial attitude?" Whatever else the local churches might claim to be, they are social institutions with the same white attitude system and thus share a common history with other social institutions within the cultural milieu where they stand. Thus the church may be imprisoned within the system. Its practices of segregation and integration

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 179.

²⁵*Ibid.*

simply reflect the norms in the area where the church is located.

Is the church doing battle with scapegoating, displacement and stereotyping within the community? Reimer goes so far as to say that the token support of the church by pronouncements and participation in the civil rights movement *does not reflect a change in basic attitude*. Instead of representing "leadership" on the part of the church's psychological identity, it represents a "cultural lag," a kind of "after thought" following the fantastic upheavals of the 1950's and 1960's. All of this leads to a kind of "un-healthy" whispering around the corner of a quasi-hospital ward, where the suburban middle-class white church lies ill. "Persons who are always raising issues are troublemakers and the minister specially must have the gifts of keeping peace in the household of God."²⁶ Joseph Hough calls this "pop koinonia." "It tends to force the churches to avoid controversial subjects and the minister breaks this taboo only at great peril."²⁷ He concludes, even as we must, "It would appear, then, that the 'middle class syndrome' of the white Protestant churches of America would result in a distinctly conservative position in regard to racial integration."²⁸

B. Behavior

Notwithstanding the conservative tendency of culture, resulting in efforts to perpetuate the white attitude syndrome, a study of

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

behavior happily indicates that change is taking place within resistance. We recall the debate between those who stress attitude or behavior as psychological factors in resistance. Behaviorism started as a protest against the assumption that the proper data of psychology are mentalistic, or "attitudes." But behaviorism was not merely a protest. It offered a positive program. It proposed putting the human being under objective observation and see *how he acts* particularly as he meets an obstacle. Today the behaviorist mission has proved that "mind-gazing" or "attitude analysis" is not all.

Earl Raab and Seymour Martin Lipset have collaborated on a significant chapter entitled "The Prejudiced Society." According to these two sociologists, "A prejudiced attitude is not a little mental package tucked away in a corner of a brain, waiting for the proper stimulus to bring it to life. . . . a prejudiced attitude does not predetermine prejudicial behavior."²⁹

Since our approach in this paper has been to follow the "whole world theory," we move from an atomistic emphasis, a dichotomy that polarizes, or an "attitude first" fallacy, and *try to see "organism of the individual or society" as a whole*. As pointed out by Professor Clinebell,

From every possible source (including art, literature, theological thought, drama, the behavioral sciences, and his experiences with human relationships) he needs to

²⁹ Earl Raab, *American Race Relations Today* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), p. 29.

widen and deepen his understanding of human nature and human situation. He needs to know what is in man and what man is in.³⁰

Therefore, one way to act in social change during times of racial tension is to apply "middle axioms." "Middle axioms" are attempts to state guidelines for behavior in the process of accommodation of the races in the slow evolution of societal change. They are more concrete than general goals and yet not specific prescriptions. Middle-axioms avoid over-categorization, which leads to a more relaxed and permissive behavior. Examples might include, "liberty and justice for all are acts and conditions of equal freedom for all races"; "peace among races means complementary accommodation"; "Creative living is the act of reciprocity in the we-structure of society."

A healthy sign for the future in the process of change and the lowering of resistance is revealed by the increase in black freshman enrollment for the 1969-70 period, as these figures quoted by James Cass indicate³¹:

	<u>1968-69</u>		<u>1969-70</u>	
	Accepted	Enrolled	Accepted	Enrolled
Brown	56	22	165	76
Columbia	58	29	115	51
Cornell	115	60	157	67
Univ. of Penn.	125	62	251	150
Yale	70	45	150	100
Wellesley	19	9	104	57

³⁰Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Mental Health Through Christian Community* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 82.

³¹James Cass, "Can the University Survive the Black Challenge?" *Saturday Review*, LII (June 21, 1969), 83.

Many changes in the white attitude system are due to the behavioral patterns of new whites. They are not only against racism; they are working for the "middle axioms" of justice and liberty, searching for fuller expressions of pluralism and respect for the races. With this same kind of leadership companies are striving to become actively antiracist. "Rooted in the behavioral sciences, these changes are coming to prominence through increased emphasis on organizational development. Companies are spending millions of dollars annually to secure advice and counsel of behavioral scientists in solving staggering organizational problems."³²

Most whites, if they use the word "racism" at all, think of individual acts, behavioristic acts of racism, such as burning a cross, dumping garbage on someone's lawn or calling a black man "nigger." Many whites who have not engaged in such acts, think that they are exonerated. They would deeply reject being called racist, or criticized for any negative behavioral acts. It was Malcolm X who said, however, "It is hard to get them (the whites) to understand that the means employed by blacks and new whites depend upon the amount of old white resistance to change."³³

Thus far, we have considered two alternatives in the psychological factors of resistance--attitudes or behavior. One alternative says, if attitudes were changed, appropriate behavior would follow. (The direction would involve feelings, beliefs, moods toward

³²Terry, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 78.

individuals or groups.) The other alternative would reverse the order, attempting to change attitudes by changing behavior. (The direction would be to change the act--the *act* of the exclusion of blacks from universities; the *act* of exclusion from decent jobs; the *act* of de facto segregation. It is the *act* that makes prejudice a problem for society.) In this paper, we have appealed for mutual consideration, rather than a debate of either/or. We turn now, in our discussion to another critical area that we must not ignore.

C. Consciousness

We have indicated that to be conscious means to be aware of ourselves in relation to selves and things about us. Now we must examine this awareness of ourselves in relation to the particular obstacle we are discussing. All have had the experience of "being thrown for a loss" in some difficult or traumatic experience, and we know how much effort has been expended to regain our physical and psychic equilibrium. This, in effect, is what is taking place socially, in regard to the white attitude system or racism, today. Robert Terry quotes from philosophy professor, Aron Gurwitsch, as stating the need for perspective, thus:

Experience always presents us with objects, things, events, etc. within certain context . . . and never with isolated and scattered data and facts. . . . Every . . . thing is perceived amidst other things which form a background for its appearance. Correspondingly, the same is true with regard to thinking. When we are dealing with some theoretical problem, more than the problem alone is given to consciousness . . .

Absorbed though our attention may be with the problem, we never lose sight of our actual surroundings nor of ourselves as situated in those surroundings.³⁴

The inclination of the old white orientation is to disregard this basic factor when we are confronted with the problem of the white attitude system. By stating that blacks and not whites are the problem, we disregard this factor. "To shift the whole issue around, to understand whites as the basic problem is to change consciousness radically."³⁵

Confrontation, which is stronger than dialogue, places *one's self* in the problem as in the paintings of Albert Durer who puts himself somewhere in the crowd. According to Jung, the conscious mind cannot create the symbol, say--"the white attitude system." Rather, symbol bridges the conscious and the unconscious. All are participants within the white attitude system. The important psychological factor is whether we, in the conscious or unconscious states, are positive or negative.

Time does not enable us to engage in a lengthy study at this point of how the individual self (or the group) acquires prejudice through the collective unconscious (Jungian) by influences of mother, sister, etc. As we have indicated, we are born with the ability to store up childhood impressions. According to Allport, "The young child seems to develop an urgent sense of his own ego (cultural superiority) by the age of three."³⁶

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, p. 305.

IV. ROLE OF NEEDS

I will now turn to a discussion of the role of needs. What are these 'role of needs' in a society with the modifications which we spoke of in Chapter I? What are the psychological factors when these social variations are progressive, permanent or temporary, directional or multi-directional, beneficial or harmful? In other words, we need to keep in mind when we discuss the role of needs that we have a completely different orientation in social ossification that resists change, than in social movement that accepts change. I will attempt to address my thoughts to the *former group* having a peculiar set of social values and philosophy of group welfare. Following the introduction I will speak of "change felt as ordeal" and "change felt as loss."

It should be pointed out that role theory has been almost completely an American development. Charles Cooley, George Herbert Mead and William James are some of the parents to the intellectual history of role theory. It is beyond the scope of this study to re-search the historical development, but rather to make a deliberate collusion with certain aspects which have been discussed previously.

In this sense I am now playing a role. A satisfying definition of a role is given by Peter Berger in *Invitation to Society*, which I will presently relate to the aspects referred to.

A role, then, may be defined as a typified response to a typified expectation. Society has predefined the fundamental typology. To use the language of the theater, from which the

concept of role is derived, we can say that society provides the script for all the *dramatis personae*. The individual actors, therefore, need but slip into the roles already assigned to them before the curtain goes up. As long as they play their roles as provided for in this script, the social play can proceed as planned.³⁷

First, I would refer the reader to the diagram by Dittes on page 29. If one were to ask what are the kaleidoscope of roles and identities which a person plays in his being (conscious and/or unconscious) one would have to enumerate those situations in society in which he is one thing and those in which he is another. We tend to play the role which society expects of us, as expressed by Cooley's description of the self as a reflection in a looking glass. Children perform better at home when praised by parents. We all work better when we are given encouragement by our superiors. Individuals tend to choose associates, and ministers tend to select congregations in such a way that the latter sustain their self-interpretations, or their roles in specific situations, within society. Thus, a person's psychological identity is his view of himself and the view society has of him in relation to the masks that he must wear to play these numerous roles. He is "the masks." He is the combination of these roles within the social situations.

Secondly, I would refer the reader to the section on page 8 which speaks of process. We can think of process in terms of roles, as the repertoire of roles a person is capable or required of playing

³⁷Peter L. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 95.

is always changing. Yet this principle of process in a sociological and psychological view of personality runs counter to the strong pressures toward consistency in the various roles which society seeks to impose on individuals and groups. Ossification, therefore, runs counter to or resistant to the fact that the self is not a solid. The self moves from one situation to another and all the time the outer and inner self is in process of change. A bachelor gives up his freedom for the "captivity" of marriage. A child gives up "childhood ways" as he is initiated into adult life. These roles do not change suddenly but by a process. Anthropologists call this change "the rite of passage." In the two examples cited, they would be the engagement period and adolescence.

This brief introduction is important for our understanding of the role of needs in relation to resistance to social change and the witness of the church, in the following manner. Society, today, is at the crossroads. We might say that it is at the point of intersection of the situation and process of change. Society has always produced the men with the roles that it needs, and has eliminated in one way or another those it does not need, and that do not fit. Society, and the church which is more and more society conscious, is engaged in the painful process of redefining its roles. In this period of rapid social change, has the social "apple cart" been up-ended? Liberation movements of many types are movements to redefine roles. Those who have been discriminated against now refuse to be discarded as unneeded or un-equal. Since human dignity is a matter of social

permission, as well as an internalization of personal worth let us consider the role of needs from the point of view of the obstructions to change.

A. Change Felt as Ordeal

In speaking of needs, it is quite impossible to be scientifically objective. The relationship between the purely scientific approach and the involved human being can be illustrated by Søren Kierkegaard's description of Hegelian thought, where one builds a magnificent palace, a great wonder to behold, but then goes on living in a hovel next to it.

The purpose of our study of the resistance to social change is not to make some coolly scientific commentaries as though we were concerned only with the stage props and the machinery of stage management. Rather, we are to see behind all categories, behind all roles, the real actors trying to live out their lives on the stage of society, during the brief span of time before their curtain closes on their act.

It is the thesis of this study that resistance to social change tends to building the castle and then living in the hovel and of being more concerned with status than needs of people. We all have related roles to fulfill certain basic needs, that we assume, that we put off, that we retire to the subconscious and that we revise and hold for future use. Kimball Young, in his *Social Psychology* defines personality "as the more or less patterned body of habits, traits, attitudes, and ideas of an individual as these are organized externally

into roles and statuses, and as they relate internally to motivation, goals, and various aspects of selfhood."³⁸ Social roles and aspects of selfhood should compliment one another.

We are particularly concerned in our study, at this point, with the *threat* to the person during times of social change. We have seen how people prefer their customary roles and consequently resist innovations which bring about social change. Freud perceived three aspects of the self which he called superego, ego, and id. The superego is roughly the role of the conscience formed through our morals and early training. The ego is that conscious phase of self which attempts to understand and cope with the forces of change. The role of the id is the subconscious, like some dark cave with elements of past experiences, old fears submerged but still operative in motivation. When this self is confronted with the situation of cultural change in society, the personality will react according to certain basic needs.

In Abraham H. Maslow's discussion in *Toward A Psychology of Being*, "He sees within every human being one set of forces which 'clings to safety and defensiveness out of fear, tending to regress backward' and another set 'which impels him toward wholeness of Self and uniqueness of Self, toward full functioning of all his capacities.'"³⁹ In relating to the needs and change felt as ordeal, Maslow and other

³⁸ Kimball Young, *Social Psychology* (New York: Crafts, 1944). Cited by Lee, Alfred McClung, *Principles of Sociology* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1951), p. 295.

³⁹ Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward A Psychology of Being* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962). Cited by Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

scholars (Fromm, Horney, Jung, Rogers, Allport and Angyal) cite evidences which point to an inherent growth drive. At the same time, the varieties of resistance emphasize the ingenuity of the personality to avoid change. *It is an ordeal to change!* Within this curious, paradoxical phenomenon--as much a part of society as of the individual--society has made spasmodic advances, resisting great blessings bitterly, at times, even to the spilling of blood.

Eric Hoffer discusses this phenomenon in his book, *The Ordeal of Change*. He writes thus:

It is my impression that no one really likes the new. We are afraid of it . . . In the case of drastic change the uneasiness is of course deeper and more lasting. We can never be really prepared for that which is wholly new. We have to adjust ourselves, and every radical adjustment is a crisis in self-esteem: we undergo a test, we have to prove ourselves.⁴⁰

Much of what Hoffer says in his book has to do with the roles of different types of people to express needs within change. In the ordeal of change, Hoffer says, there should be no tyranny, no totalitarian system that lords it over the minds of men, the substituting of a new form of control for the previous one. Hoffer advocates a kind of ordeal within society that keeps alive the growth and development of the human personality. He feels that the antagonism between the intellectuals and the powers that be which is part of the current social milieu is a good thing and satisfies a basic need in our changing society. "An antagonism between the intellectual and the

⁴⁰Eric Hoffer, *The Ordeal of Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 1.

powers that be serves a more vital purpose than the advancement of the masses: it keeps the social order from stagnating."

The roles of functionaries in the movement for social change on our campuses and those who resist change, were observed on television, Wednesday, September 17, 1970 when President Nixon spoke to 15,000 college students at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. These rough, non-exclusive, role types, as observed at Kansas State, might be classified as:

Societal Roles: All members of families present at the rally: sons and daughters, mothers and fathers. Role of needs expressed would be examples of configurations of morals in terms of man-as-he-should be, student-as-he-should be. Other roles provided crystallizations of status, power, for example government officials, minister groups, professors, etc.

Professional Promoters: Those resisting social change would include the President. President Nixon's motivation was primarily "professional" or status-giving. He gave status to the University in these words: "It is time for responsible university and college administrators, faculty and student leaders to stand up and be counted." Whereupon, all but the 40 or 50 hecklers gave Nixon a standing ovation and applauded for several minutes.

Fellow Travelers: Those who were present to perform the role of recording and carrying the message of the proceedings, the reporters, camera-men, etc., contributed to the ordeal of change by commentary.

For example, Ernest Murphy II, editor of the Kansas State Collegian, the student newspaper on the conservative campus, said, "The President was talking at us, rather than with us." There were other fellow travelers, acting unconscious roles, wearing purple-and-white ties, color symbol of the university.

Agitators: In the big fieldhouse, about 40 or 50 hecklers sat in the topmost row and kept up a running commentary on the presidential speech. In similar situations, agitators for change and anti-change, each claiming special grace, personal symbolism, charisma and mission, coupled with uncompromising fanaticism, played the role of spear-heading the movement of change, campaign or program. The clash of roles resulted in confrontation.

Fronts: Those satisfying personal needs by opposing change included the police.

"Just Members": We indicate these in quotes, because, even in a democracy there is a danger of socially assigned identities or roles simply by the bulk of numbers. In the case of Kansas University these would include the great majority of students, the bulk of the members of the audience, wanting to be identified with "law and order" on the campus.

From these roles, projected by T.V. on the global theater, we can visualize the conflict between two forms of need satisfaction--those contributing to change and those opposing change. From this conflict grew the major problem phrased by the president.

B. Change Felt as Loss

Role change is both sought and resisted, whether it is from one social class to another (as following the Great Depression); one race to another (as takes place in mixed marriages); one prestige scale to another (as in being demoted in a prestige position); or even vertical mobility with loss of ethnic minority and racial identity. All contain a shift in personality. "There is evidence from psychotherapeutic experience that all change is experienced as loss."⁴¹

This role change has been likened to "bereavement experience."⁴² Changes that involve major alterations in one's pattern of need-satisfying interpersonal relationships, say these writers, are particularly painful to the insecure and anxious people. They tend to resist such changes. "Similar resistance may also be directed toward threatening changes in one's society."⁴³

It is fitting that we bring this chapter to a conclusion by allowing resistance as loss to become a bridge over which we may pass to the final chapter of fulfillment in the witness of the church. James E. Dittes has expressed this in relation to resistance in psychotherapy when he says, "Resistance becomes . . . the very instrument by which therapy most effectively works. 'The core of the therapeutic process consists in overcoming the resistance.'"⁴⁴ When Dittes speaks

⁴¹Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴James E. Dittes, *The Church in The Way* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 46.

of "instrument" he is, of course, referring to means and not manipulation. Perhaps too often in the church we use resistance to change as a manipulative device, rather than viewing it as another symptom of the "grieving body of Christ." When we are lovingly concerned with a person's grief, and the defenses are down, this indeed becomes the means of therapeutic healing and ministry.

CHAPTER IV

THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

Having considered resistance to change, it now remains to indicate lessons for the witness of the church. In a brief introduction, a few preliminary remarks may be helpful.

First, support of constructive change is the business of the whole church. If we take as a broad definition of social action, any activity which has as its purpose to influence man's condition and behavior through a structuring of his environment, then the Christian Church is already in participation either through the activities of individual members or as groups within the church. The list of those activities would be extensive. When a member or a group writes to a senator on behalf of some humanitarian cause, this would be social action. Something as innocuous as backing the P.T.A., or recognizing the Boy Scouts on Boy Scout Sunday, is social action.

Secondly the thesis of this study is that people, generally, are resistive to such social change. This is demonstrated by our research from historical, sociological and psychological points of view. Particularly, in controversial issues, or with a poorly developed theology, this resistance often appears within the church itself. This chapter will attempt to explore the resistance factor in the witness of the church, and thus, hopefully discover that *when resistances are honestly dealt with*, as in therapy, resistances can signal resources for the purpose of God.

Thirdly, in order to work towards a gestalt, it will be helpful as we think of the witness of the whole church, to express ourselves by means of the Biblical metaphor of the "body and its members" as outlined for us by Paul in I Cor. 12:4ff. The various parts of the body are only illustrative of the various functions within the witness of the church, for example, the mouth is illustrative of preaching, etc. No schematic similarity is intended; nor will we labor the analogy in this chapter. Therefore, in order to keep the metaphor in proper perspective, we simply refer now to the fact that we will reflect on this metaphor in the summary along with original drawings, as one possible gestalt for the total witness of the church.

I. THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING

One of the first incidents recorded in the Bible suggests that, within the environmental situation, man very early became a resistor. We read of this in Genesis 3:8-9.

They heard the sound of the Lord God . . . and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God . . . but the Lord God called and said . . . 'Where are you?'

As we move into a theological analysis of this type of reaction, we are particularly concerned with the existential aspect of this experience. Existentialism views the human situation from all angles, but primarily from the point of view of alienation, resistance, from the sense of the loss of meaning in the total life situation. When we approach the Word revealed, existentially, we find that it speaks to our present day predicament and sin.

The present situation can be described by the word "angst." This word was brought into relatively common diction from the German by Paul Tillich. Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian, used the equivalent earlier. "Angst" means anxiety--but this is not a surface anxiety but a deep, inner unrest and turmoil. Persons feeling this anxiety easily become conservatives who want no changes of any kind in the established order. This is one way to blunt the witness of the church and would seem to repeat again the experience of hiding from God in the garden.

Happily, our theological grounding in the witness of the church does not stop with a condition of "lostness." By the utterance of the Spirit, the voice continues to call out, "Where are you?" The theme of the entire Bible is that God kept on loving His people. During the countless number of experiences of resistance, God encountered man, and man encountered God. Man also encountered man, and he learned in an intrapersonal way to encounter himself and to accept himself, because God had accepted him. In order to be grounded in our theology, in the witness of the Christian Church, we must constantly remember this triadic relationship. The vertical relationship of the love of God to man and man's response to God is incomplete without the horizontal relationship of man's love of neighbor as of self, taught by Jesus in the second commandment.

Through the long history of the church, resistances to social change have blunted its witness. A great variety of theological schools and viewpoints have come from the tension between the polar

opposites, in the dialectic process of resistances one to the other, namely "God-ward" vs. "man-ward." The Christian ethic which seeks to define the "why" of human behavior attempts to find the gestalt in Jesus Christ. He combines the two in His incarnation.

Finally, therefore, a theology for the witness of the church is grounded in the One who was called "the Word." "In the beginning was the Word." (John 1:1) Jesus came with a new utterance of the Spirit. He came preaching the gospel. The Christian Gospel is the good news or good tidings--an announcement--the word stating that salvation has come to this world through the life, teachings, and atoning death of Jesus Christ. He provides a basic security which sustains a powerful thrust toward change.

We have assessed the fact that social structures, historically, have resisted change. This was no less true of the temple and leaders in Jesus' day. This could become the condition of the church today, when it continually resists the utterances of the Spirit. If change is of the Spirit and the stability of the church is grounded in the young man of Galilee, who went about doing good and preaching the Kingdom of God and who died young outside a city wall, then God can yet use the church to witness to His presence in the world. "God was in Christ reconciling us to himself" (individually) and, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (socially and in community). (II Corinthians 5:18, 19)

II. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Education and resistance to education is a second factor in the

witness of the church. This is especially clear when we keep in mind the meaning of education and Christian education. Education may be defined as a process through which people are changed. In this respect we discussed, in Chapter I, the developmental aspect of education taught by Lester Ward. Education thus brings about changes in perception, or in thinking, or feeling, or acting. Christian education, as defined by Loren Broadus in "Reward in Learning," "strives to change a person at the attitudinal level so that he may experience a unified way of perceiving, thinking about, feeling for and acting toward God, people and self."¹ According to Broadus, such a total attitudinal approach to total man "has not been the experience of many people in the Church."² He goes on to say,

People want to know about the Christian faith rather than to know it. They want knowledge without experience, understanding without involvement, and reward without work. The church often has unintentionally deceived these people by furnishing information and assuring them that it was salvation. To know about something is not the same thing as knowing it.³

A group of Sunday School teachers wanted help in what is usually described as a "discipline" problem. They felt prepared to teach the lesson as far as being able to grasp the meaning of the words. At least they thought so! Yet they were often caught in an insurmountable barrier of gaining decorum and attention. So they appealed to the minister for some kind of special training on the

¹Loren Broadus, "Reward in Learning," *Bethany Guide*, 45:2 (October 1970), 5.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

problems of discipline.

A "teacher of teachers" was invited to conduct special training sessions on "discipline." He began leading a discussion on the goals of teaching. This seemed so remote from the problem of discipline that the teachers resisted and the minister whispered a gentle reminder to the visitor, thinking that he had confused the topic. But he persisted in drawing the teachers out into the stating of their purposes in being teachers.

As they continued, the teachers began to realize that some of the more difficult lessons on human brotherhood and justice, for example, were being acted out right in the classroom. One teacher had been disheartened by having a carefully planned dramatization of the Parable of the Good Samaritan disrupted by two boys of different races who broke from the group and wrestled in the corner.

Fortunately, the teacher now recognized the opportunity of turning resistance into an asset. She discovered with an "aha!" that she had in her very classroom, a real-life 'play within a play.' Instead of having to teach from a social problem from some remote past, her class had staged it in concrete actual experience.

The witness of the church in education is to combine word symbols such as "neighbor," "pass by on the other side," "Samaritan," "mercy," etc. with realities. We are in danger, in our witness through education, to confuse the roadsign for the road, the advertisement for the product, the "knowing about" the Gospel for "knowing" it. The very resistance we deplore within the church may become curriculum

material. Responding creatively and objectively to resistance can bring about surprising changes. This lifts the teacher-student relationship away from a parent-child transactional relationship (Berne) to a more mature adult-adult relationship. Resistances can be invitations to tune in and not tune out human behavior. As Harvey Seifert and Howard Clinebell stress in *Personal Growth and Social Change*,

In methods of communication we have often been content to throw the gospel like a stone into the crowd on the theory that God alone can awaken a response. Because of our ineptness, the stone has fallen with a dull thud to be met only by annoyance and hostility. We may have been tolerably faithful to God in the general content of our utterances, but faithless as workmen in method.⁴

It is the thesis of our study on the witness of the church through education, that the annoyance, hostility, resistance factors of which these authors speak, should give us the "aha!" reaction. The resistance should be recognized as a "come on," "I hurt here," "here I am calling out, 'someone save me!'" That is what is meant when it says, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

III. PREACHING

The same insight applies to the word that is preached. The words of James Dittes are nowhere more applicable than in preaching. "The resistance which seems most to thwart ministry may be the best occasion for ministry."⁵

⁴Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Personal Growth and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 23.

⁵James E. Dittes, *The Church in The Way* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. vi.

Within the total witness of the church, what is the acquirable asset of resistance for the particular activity we call "preaching"? Before attempting to answer this question directly, I would like to draw from other settings for illustrative purpose. Take as an example a football coach and his players. He teaches the players how to play football by (1) having them practice, (2) identifying what they do right and wrong and thus helping them to see the total process of the team working together and (3) theorizing with the team on the basis of experience or the films of previous games. In all these respects he relates to their resistances. The whole purpose is to become a dynamic and effective football team that goes out and wins games. The same can be true of the medical interne who practices theories of medicine on his patients. The barber attends barber college where he practices on his victims, much to their delight or chagrin.

The minister in the art of preaching has a similar reciprocal relationship with the congregation. Together they form a team in the witness of the church. According to Fosdick, many preachers today are ineffective because they fail to be practical and to address the congregation where there is a felt need. He suggests that preaching should start with a life issue, a real problem, personal or social, which perplexes people in the situation in which they find themselves. Then the preacher would deal with it honestly and throw light on it from the Spirit of God, the Bible, and other resources, in order that people will be able to go out and think more clearly and live more nobly because of that sermon.

This is better done when there is direct interaction with members of the congregation. Why would it not be possible to make use of buzz sessions following the morning worship, to deal directly with members of the congregation in their "hang-ups" and resistances, as the coach does with his players?

One of the false assumptions of the lecture method of preaching is that change takes place in the witness of the church when the congregation acquires new and more effective information. One may learn from the pulpit that the population explosion threatens mankind, but not devote five minutes of thought of doing anything about it. One may learn from the pulpit that thousands of people in the world die every day of starvation, yet leave the church without any thought of giving aid. The minister might even remind them that during the time, say 30 minutes, that it has taken to tell them, over 60 people have died of starvation.⁶ Efforts to stress the witness of the church, and to preach the word on problems like race relations, or poverty, have been met by as many excuses to ignore and to resist.

The church, in her witness, must find new ways to deal with what Leon Festinger calls "cognitive dissonance." As Broadus put it, "Most church members would endorse the brotherhood of all men as a basic Christian truth in general, but many church people deny it in living as they are confronted with specific situations where they must

⁶Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine, 1968).

act upon it."⁷ When the members really come to feel the conflict between their religious beliefs and their social standards and economic needs, they experience the tension of cognitive dissonance.

According to James Dittes in *The Church in The Way* this tension is the very opportunity for the minister:

To claim that resistance may be vital, positive response seems a prime instance in which the psychologist is saying that things are the opposite of the way they appear. . . . We are suggesting that instances in which a minister feels that his words or his dreams or his programs are being most neglected may be the times that they are most heeded. The vigorous signs of neglect or rejection are active responses. Something must be hitting the target or he wouldn't be provoking what he experiences as neglect.⁸

In the experience of change which involves pain and resistance, minister and laymen of the church will be reliving the experience of the first congregation that hid themselves in the garden, when they heard God's voice in the garden saying, "Where are you?" If the church body is to come out of hiding, it must leave its cover and not "resist the Spirit" when it hears God's voice. It must become sensitive to the opportunities and responsibilities of witness in the creation where God has placed us.

Lord, I am afraid of my pulpit.
 I am afraid it is irrelevant.
 I am afraid of the demands it makes upon
 my time and energy.

And yet it stands there in the Church.
 It stands to tell me I must speak.
 It stands to speak as once it spoke to me.
 So I must mount its steps again.

⁷Broadus, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁸Dittes, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

Lord, I am afraid of my pulpit.
 Because I am a member of the Church
 Because I am a sinner with the Church
 And I partake of all her faults.

And yet I have to preach.
 I have to preach before the Sacrament.
 I have to preach where men can answer back
 in groups, discussion and in dialogue.

Lord, I am afraid of my pulpit.
 Give me grace to see its relevance.
 Give me grace to trust its future.
 Give me words to speak Thy grace.
 Thy grace which called
 Thy grace which equipped
 Thy grace which I encountered
 through the words our Savior uttered;
 Probing words,
 Cleaning words,
 Healing words.
 The words of the Word made flesh, spoken
 from the pulpit of his body
 Jesus-Christ our Lord.⁹

IV. COLLABORATIVE STYLE AS MODEL

The collaborative style is helpful everywhere in the church, as in administration, team teaching, fellowship groups, but particularly in those situations which deal with resistance and conflict. How can these obstacles to communication be avoided or creatively used?

Since we cling to existing habits and customs, we oppose those who press for change. Finite man is not completely wise and altruistic. Men do not immediately and unanimously recognize an improved procedure for what it is. Since all of us are biased, we need to balance one rival presentation against another. Disagreements about values and programs are intensified by failures in communication. Messages are distorted by the personal needs of both sender and receiver.¹⁰

⁹D. W. Cleverley Ford, *Preaching Today* (London: Epworth Press, 1969), pp. ii & iii.

¹⁰Seifert, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

We are, therefore, concerned with the most appropriate model for handling resistances and resources. Seifert and Clinebell name three models or styles of participation for clergymen and laymen: permissive, collaborative and coercive. By permissive is meant a kind of laissez-faire position, each person following his own inclination as change agent. "In the collaborative model the change agent shares with the group the power of direction and decision-making."¹¹ As a third style, "a change agent may act coercively using pressure to compel compliance."¹² These models are not mutually exclusive but rather overlapping and their use depends upon a number of factors in the witness of the church.

For example, let us suppose that a church is asked to witness to the desegregation of the schools in a changing community. The art of communication and accuracy of perception places a heavy burden upon the communicator, the minister in this case. If he tried to manipulate and become coercive, he is apt to create a jungle of words, emotions and conflicting opinions. Resistances may become solidified.

Coercive methods ought to be kept to a minimum, but some degree of restricting the maneuvers of persons may be necessary for the sake of more important values. Otherwise, we leave injustice, exploitation, and evil triumphant.¹³

According to this author, the ethic of means should be in relationship to social change. In other words, "loving concern requires that we accept strategies until the point that the increasing

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 58.

evil of means outweighs a decreasing desirability of consequences."¹⁴

Members of the church should listen to one another's position, and above all be honest, expressing feeling and, if possible discuss prejudices and resistances openly and frankly. As the best model for the church's witness in the outreach of the body of Christ, the church, the collaborative style, as outlined by Seifert and Clinebell is presented here, in full¹⁵:

<u>Roles of Ministry</u>	<u>Collaborative style</u>	
	<u>Stimulative style</u>	<u>Persuasive style</u>
Counseling	Supportive counseling: Relationship counseling	Reality therapy: Confrontational counseling
Teaching	Guidance in common exploration, with leader as resource person	Structured teaching of a viewpoint or task
Social action	Encouragement of many- sided discussion	Emphasis on effective publicity for a position

All that we have said in this section on the collaborative style as a resource for the witness of the church, should be placed in the context of the preceding section on theology. In this continuum, the social processes are seen as a reflection of God's will and of the incarnation of His Being and purpose in the world through Jesus Christ. When we see our sin as resistance to His will and alienation from His Being, only the ultimate concern for New Being will give us the "courage to be" (Tillich) and to become participants in the New Creation.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 54.

V. ACTION PROJECTS

We turn now to a number of action projects in the life situation experience of the witnessing church. I will speak of three of these: COMMIT which means Center of Metropolitan Mission In-Service Training, church and community surveys and growth groups. Action projects are difficult to communicate by written word. For example, "The Rock-Bottom Plunge" of living in Skid Row for three days, with only a toothbrush and comb and \$5.00 is difficult to communicate with hand and typewriter for it is a learning experience through exposure, reflection and action. The same may be said concerning the experience of living for one week on a welfare budget.

This is, essentially, what we mean by the witnessing church. The church becomes a witness, a participant not only in the life of Christ, but also in the life of the community. COMMIT is one of many resources for educational participation leading to action. The primary concern of COMMIT is to develop social change skills and thus reduce resistance. We tend to fear the unknown. It is by exposure (experience) and then reflecting on that experience by way of group discussion that witness becomes a normal concomitant. Through commitment we increase our sensitivity to the Word as it may be coming to expression in particular situations. Our willingness within the church, to accept such exposure and reflection, is an indication of our desire to be changed and to participate in directing change.

Almost all of the training that COMMIT has done has been self-recruited or denominationally recruited. That is, the trainees,

wishing to become involved in the witness of the church, have heard about the resources COMMIT has to offer and they have taken the initiative to contact someone on the COMMIT staff or board. Most of the training has been done with those who are working together (often interdenominationally) in the community which has immediate problems and needs to be met. "Our work" says one leader of COMMIT "is to help the lame to walk, and to open the eyes of the blind, and heal those who are perfectly happy with their sickness." Thus, through COMMIT, Christ's announced Mission in Nazareth, is action-oriented, today.

I will now speak of church and community surveys as resources in the witness of the church. As the church seeks to witness during times of rapid social change, it requires accurate data as a basis for shaping the most suitable programs. Involvement seeks to focus on specific projects defined in the light of facts to be gathered and recorded. Methods used are surveys, questionnaires, lay-over charts and graphic presentations. The purpose is to guide the laymen to find direction for further witness.

I will now present for clarification an outline of an actual project which I conducted during the summer of 1969. The occasion for the research design in church and community analysis was a racial flare-up at Pomona High School which took place in the middle of June of that year.

The community concern which developed subsequently opened up channels of communication with consultants in Youth Services of the Community Services Department of the County of Los Angeles, the

Coordinating Council of Pomona, the Pomona Urban Coalition with whom I met for a two-month period, members of Pomona City Hall, Ministerial Association, a Church Social Action Committee and directors of youth centers.

Concurrently the statement of purpose of the research design was decided upon with the help of the Urban Coalition: *Arising from the incident at Pomona High School, this questionnaire survey is to determine the feasibility of a called meeting, sponsored by the Urban Coalition, for dialog-action of responsible members of the community for social change.* The questionnaire was given initial testing with an acceptance rating from most ministers, churches and the P.T.A. but with a resistance rating from others.

The continuing survey of community organization opened new understanding of the behavioral patterns of all persons in a multi-dimensional problem. I felt the witness of the church as I conducted the survey among members of the Committee of Social Education and Action of the United Church of Christ (Congregational) in Claremont. Resistance to change that was felt in some sectors of the community led me to incorporate the following conclusions adapted from Goodwin Watson, *Concepts for Social Change*. These are objectively stated on the side of the "Defender Role" against the Seminarian attempting to carry out the research design. These may be applicable to a church seeking to witness in a similar situation.

- (1) "Few psychological traits are so universal as that of

suspicion and hostility toward strange outsiders."¹⁶

I feel confident that if I had had the time, money and the assistance (such as staff of callers) to conduct an extensive survey, throughout Pomona City Hall, more and more would have called me "outside agitator," "Communist inspired," etc. I even noted some resentment from among the members of the Urban Coalition who live in the hard conditions of reality. I was an outsider, who really didn't know what it was like. This criticism has also been leveled at Saul Alinsky and his staff, e.g. that he and his team leave the community as soon as the action commences. He claims that this criticism is not justified. He says that his purpose is to have the work continued by the indigenous leadership of the community, and that the team continues to keep in touch on a consultant basis after the team leaves.

(2) "Resistance will be less if the project clearly has wholehearted support from top officials of the system."¹⁷

(3) "Resistance will be less if the program offers the kind of new experience which interests participants."¹⁸

(4) "Resistance will be less if participants feel that their autonomy and their security is not threatened."¹⁹

(5) "Resistance will be reduced if it is recognized that innovations are likely to be misunderstood and misinterpreted, and if provision is made for feedback of perceptions of the project and for

¹⁶Goodwin Watson, *Concepts of Social Change* (Washington: National Training Laboratories, 1967), p. 21.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 23.

further clarification as needed."²⁰ This procedure for instituting change, I felt that I had attempted.

(6) "Resistance will be less if participants have joined in diagnostic efforts leading them to agree on the basic problem and to feel its importance."²¹

(7) "Resistance will be reduced if the project is kept open to revision and reconsideration if experience indicates that changes would be desirable."²²

To conclude, church and community surveys as resources in the witness of the church, practically force ministers and laymen alike into a working relationship with community resources and hopefully to community action.

As we turn our attention to growth groups, we are concerned with a discussion of group dynamics which may be applied to the atmosphere of acceptance when resistance would seem to block the witness of the church. According to James Dittes, the "natural" reaction in the church to undo disruption and to overcome resistance as expeditiously as possible is to change the method of our ministry. In groups where controversial matters are discussed, resistances have often been bypassed. It seemed the better part of wisdom to avoid.

How much more honest it would be to minister to the whole person including the resistive reaction and to find as much meaning as possible, in the context of the total situation.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

We are proposing here that the minister's better strategy, like the psychotherapist's, is to think of his task as welcoming, garnering, and rechanneling these energies and resources revealed by the resistance, rather than in wishing, arguing, cajoling, or blasting them or the resistance--or the resisters out of existence. The more inappropriate, the more excessive, the more intense, the more rigidly persistent, the more stubbornly repetitious, and above all, the more miserably frustrating for the minister are these resistances, the more, we make bold to suggest, he may look to them for hopeful signs that persons are in fact gripped or touched, that they are sensitive and responsive, that they feel themselves committed within a context that makes them feel it necessary to grapple, even so obstinately.²³

The minister, as adult facilitator, would thus attempt to show that repression, resistance, is the key to the conflicts. Freud discovered this. He discovered that it was in the stubborn resistance of patients to his earnest therapeutic attempts to minister that he found the key to "intrapsychic conflict." If this is so for an understanding of conflicts within human personality, it certainly provides the foundation for an understanding of "dynamic psychology" within the "Body of Christ," the church.

Resistance to change in social systems may be detected in group dynamics, thus:

(1) By conformity to norms. Persons in the group become habituated to forms of address to colleagues, superiors and subordinates with personal ambitions to rise.

(2) Systematic and cultural coherence. Using the gestalt principle for the witness of the whole church, it may be noted that a change in the group attitude toward a social system or cause effects

²³Dittes, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

the whole. Innovation at one point is resisted because of its pervasive effect and repercussions.

(3) Vested interests. A most obvious source of resistance is the threat to the economic or prestige interests of individuals and groups. Powerful political or financial interests within the church can block proposals desired by a large majority of the membership. Through group dynamics one might deal with the influence of upper-class families in the life of the church.

(4) The sacrosanct. Anthropologists note that change occurs more rapidly in some areas of society than in others. Greatest resistance comes from areas regarded as "sacred." Have the group research this in relationship to gaps in society: generation gap, status gap, sex gap, racial gap, technological gap, etc.

(5) Rejection of "outsiders." Group dynamics can help discover who are "outsiders" in the community. Who is charged with being "outside agitators," "atheistic Communists"?

Thus, through group dynamics and growth groups, the witness of the church may be the "listening post" for vibrations for change. Social change is greatly facilitated when initiative and participation is largely from within the institution, and not imposed by some higher order of church hierarchy.

VI. SUMMARY

In this summary, I will direct the attention toward a gestalt in the witness of the church. In our study of the Resistance to Social

Change and the Witness of the Church, we have grafted one idea upon another. It is hoped that these ponderables have been meaningfully joined into the intended inquiry. The "hybridization of ideas and experiences"²⁴ is in itself an important factor in the development of our study. But I would insist that different ideas from my own and maintained in opposition, be respected and that a resultant be found that goes beyond the best that combined ideas can produce. "There is more dynamite in an idea than in many bombs."²⁵

The idea in the Bible which forms the background of this summary is found in I Corinthians 12:4ff. It speaks of the metaphor of the body. The particular functions which I have given to the various parts of the body named by Paul, are my own and only suggestive as we work toward a gestalt in the witness of the church. Let another reader supply his own explicit reminders. After all, the meaningfulness of a gestalt is in the eye of the beholder, the thought of the subject and in being gripped by the reality that is there. A clinical perspective of resistance to social change and the witness of the church should lead to wise strategy and positive functioning on the part of many.

I see in the mouth an amazing set of muscle with extensions all interrelated to produce words. "To one is given through the Spirit the utterance."²⁶ I see in the *mouth* the witness of the church in

²⁴Eugene and Fanchon Mead, *Man Among Men* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 357.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 358.

²⁶I Cor. 12:8.



theological grounding (the word revealed); in education (the word taught); and in preaching (the word preached).

I see in the hand the symbol of fellowship, administration, democracy within the church, and the collaborative style as model. No part of the body can "say to the hand I have no need of you."²⁷

I see in the feet the exposure of the church through action and participation such as COMMIT seeks to develop. "The head (cannot say) to the feet I have no need of you."²⁸

I see in the intricate mechanism of the eye the kind of scrutiny and scientific study which takes place through the church and community surveys. "If the ear should say 'because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body."²⁹

I see in the ear, with the graceful tunnels and compact compartments to transmit and receive sound, the church's ministry of listening. Group dynamics in social change within the church might be described as the art and function of the inner ear. "If the whole body were an eye where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear where would be the sense of smell?"³⁰

²⁷I Cor. 12:21

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹I Cor. 12:16

³⁰I Cor. 12:17



At last, we are asked to ponder the meaning of the whole body, in the total witness of the church. "If all were a single organ, where would the body be?"³¹

But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose . . .

As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.³²

³¹I Cor. 12:19

³²I Cor. 12:18, 24b-27



But then, I see also another body, that has become undesirable having lost the function of some of its parts. In God's eye has the body of the church ever become thus: as described in the language of Eric Hoffer in *Ordeal of Change* concerning the castoffs of society in a federal transient camp in California?

Some men limped. One young, good-looking fellow had a wooden leg. . . . We in the camp were a human junk pile.³³

One might well ponder why God places so much hope in the church and her witness. There is only one answer. Christ came for the "undesirables." "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Eph. 5:25)

³³Eric Hoffer, *The Ordeal of Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 140.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHIES OF ACCEPTORS

The following list of biographies of acceptors has been adapted from a more extensive list by Homer Garner Barnett in *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change*. Although tangential to our main concern in this study, the list is included for our consideration.

(1) Chronic acceptors. For various reasons they are incapable of making distinctions. They accept everyone and everything. They may be going through the adolescent stage of "identity diffusion."

(2) Imitators. These are the "copyists." "All imitation must entail some discrepancy even when a person tries to imitate himself."¹ We are all imitators when we emphasize certain virtues such as truth and social graces. Children become like parents. Students copy the teacher. A friend models upon his favorite associate. We also model on cultural heroes like Moses, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

(3) Compromisors. This may be an indication of strength and merit, as for example, the fusion of religious forms and beliefs in COCU. On the other hand the syncretism of Britain's Prime Minister Chamberlain was thought of as weakness.

(4) Compliant acceptors. When people, individuals or groups in society are taught to revere and fear authority as in Russia, people become "indoctrinated" toward one course of action. Socialization is an authoritarian device.

(5) Unconscious acceptors. We accept many customs and practices of society, simply because that's the way things are done. Ogburn lists 150 effects of the radio, for example. Many of these are unconscious effects. "They interlace American culture."²

(6) Professional acceptors. These are the lobbyists, teachers, ministers, etc. The spread of Christianity and its survival depends upon acceptors of Jesus.

¹Homer G. Barnett, *Innovation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953), p. 49.

²*Ibid.*, p. 90.

(7) Out-group acceptors. These are the acceptors of foreign customs living in another land, as the Israelites in Babylon. They are eclectic. They often straddle two ways of life, accepting the best of two or more cultural systems.

(8) Conservative acceptors. These are the ones who preserve the status quo. "The issue to him is not one of self-change, but of change on the part of others to bring them into agreement with himself."³ They include class in power, industrial managers, institutional bosses, social elite, upper and middle class.

³*Ibid.*, p. 307.

APPENDIX B

RIGHT WING ATTACK ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

The following section on "Right Wing Attack on Public Education" is from the report of the Standing Committee on Church and Society of the 182nd General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America held in Chicago, May 20-27, 1970. The section is presented in its entirety but without comment.¹

III. Right Wing Attack on Public Education

A public issue of great importance is emerging in American life but it is disguised by a narrower, more controversial, secondary issue. The underlying problem is an attack on public education, its financing, its policy formation, and its curriculum.

The superficial issue, which is serving as an increasingly popular avenue of attack on the basic one, is the furor over sex education in the schools. The public controversy is now (November 1969) a year old. Its subject is an ingredient that began to appear (in modern form) in the curriculum on a fairly wide scale nearly two decades ago.

The fundamental issue--discontent with the public schools--is building steam now for several reasons. Homeowners are increasingly resistive at the relentless rise of school taxes. Many white parents resist and resent the incorporation of little black children into the little white schoolhouse. The parental side of the generation gap is dismayed at student unrest, mores, and questioning of adult values and sincerity. The bewildering pace of change in the sciences and technology indeed bewilders Americans who are not scientifically or technically oriented. The new permissiveness in literature and entertainment celebrates publicly scenes and actions once reserved to private fantasy and the secret circulation of "dirty books," stag movies, and "French postcards"--and alarms and angers many adults for many reasons.

¹United Presbyterian Church. General Assembly. *Minutes* (Philadelphia: 1970), I, 985-87.

The American right has been apprehensive about the direction of education for several generations. It has seen threats to Americanism, the Protestant ethic, and the noble concepts of capitalism and rugged individualism in "progressive education," in "life adjustment education," in psychological testing and mental health programs, in guidance and counseling programs, and in open discussion in the schools of highly controversial subjects that many parents prefer to have hidden from--unilaterally treated before--their children. Behind most or all of these threatening developments in education, the right wing has seen the cunning hand of the "Godless Communist conspiracy."

Now, as family life and sex education programs are adopted ever more widely in the public schools, the right--much of which has long been obsessed with puritan views of sex--has moved to attack this new threat to probity, purity, and patriotism. Since the fall of 1968 the onslaught against "sex in the schools" has accelerated. Twenty or more state legislatures have considered banning or rigidly restricting family life and sex education programs in the schools of their states. Members of Congress have filled hundreds of pages of the fine print of the *Congressional Record* with diatribes from right wing antagonists of sex education. State commissioners or boards of education in many instances also have fallen into line with public pressures skillfully applied by a zealous minority.

Misinformation, misapprehension, and misunderstanding of the facts about, and the methods and motives of family life and sex educators have been spread in community after community to discredit the concept of sex education--*and by doing so to discredit the public schools as they operate today.*

The emerging issue is the latter. Using the weapon of an attack on sex education, the right wing is rallying uninformed but properly concerned parents to overturn school construction bond issues, to vote down school budgets, and to change the complexion of school boards to conform to its own positions. Increasingly, school board election contests are won by citizens whose educational concerns are negative: no budget increase, no new schools, no "non-academic" courses, no discussion of controversial issues, no books with references to sex or with unpatriotic authors, no bussing across neighborhood lines, and--almost incidentally, no sex education.

While the public at large is keenly aware of the furor over sex education, the attention focused on this secondary issue obscures the deeper one of how the content of public education shall be determined and taught, and how the price of public education shall be paid.

Thus the attack on public education is relatively invisible, and its impact upon our society is great. The age in which we live challenges education to keep up with incessant new developments in

science and the technology, and to cope with a new morality. At this same moment, a rival challenge, a regressive and restrictive one, faces the basic unit of American public education, the local schools, offering to compress education into the narrow framework of the three R's.

What is needed is careful examination of this hidden issue, so that its dimensions may be understood. The underlying issue needs the attention of the nation, and the voice of the church ought to lead in demanding that attention--and then participating in the necessary study and clarification, in context with the other approaches of the church to the varied problems of public education.

APPENDIX C

"HISTORICAL SITUATION OF FAR LEFT AND FAR RIGHT"

I. FAR LEFT IN AMERICA

A. 1900-1935

In America we slowly became aware of the following:

1. Lenin in 1902 wrote "What is to be Done."
2. Lenin wrote in 1913, "State and Revolution" and "Dictatorship of the Proletariat."
3. Lenin in 1917 revised the theory of class struggle to embrace struggle between colonial powers and subject peoples.
4. In 1920, international Communism given its marching orders.
5. In 1932 Stalin hoped to spark a violent revolution in U.S. by circulating 100,000 paperback copies of "Foundations of Leninism."
6. Country slow to "catch on"--(Lenin's selected works, not published until 1943 in U.S.).

B. 1935-1955

1. Twenty years of liberal dissent making the New Deal possible.
2. Many on Right would have called these "Far Left."
3. Communism began to be read and studied in earnest.

C. 1955-1960 -- '60s-'70s

1. From Theodore Roszak¹
 "I think we can anticipate that in the coming generation, large numbers of students will begin to reject this reductive humanism, demanding a far deeper examination of that dark side of the human personality which has so long been written of by our dominant culture as 'mystical.'"

¹Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 147.

2. From Julian Beck²
 " . . . it is 1968
 i see the black man
 forced to accept violence
 i see the pacifists despair
 and accept violence
 . . . we want to change the demonic
 character of our opponents
 into productive glory."

II. FAR RIGHT IN AMERICA

A. 1900-1945

1. Radical right, an indigenous movement, did not start as a power movement directed against communism.
2. Reflected rise of power groups around "property."
3. Tension came from social mobility (upward) of lower middle classes and later the blacks and other minorities.
4. Social ethic tied into moralism of "this-world" concern of religious tradition.
5. Daniel Bell in *The Radical Right* says,
 "This has been a middle-class culture and there may be considerable truth to the generalization of Svend Ranulf that moral indignation is a peculiar fact of middle-class psychology and represents a disguised form of repressed envy."³

B. 1935-1955

1. Reaction to the new left.
2. Disclosure of Whittaker Chambers of the infiltration of Communists into high posts in government, (Rosenberg case, etc.) caused "Communist issue," loyalty oaths on the campus and the miasma of fear and extreme forms of resistance under the guidance of Senator Joseph McCarthy. A wrecker, extreme resistor . . . "His targets and his language do, indeed provide important clues to the radical right that supported him, and the reason for that support."⁴

²Julian Beck, "Paradise Now," cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

³Daniel Bell, *The Radical Right* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 50.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 47.

3. Status politics, according to Richard Hofstadter, are . . . "groups that are upwardly mobile (i.e. that are advancing in wealth and social position) are often as anxious and as politically febrile as groups that have become déclassé. Many observers have noted that groups which have lost their social position seek more violently than ever to impose on all groups the older values of a society which they once bore."⁵

C. 1955-1960 -- '60s-'70s

1. Rise of the pseudo (ultra) conservative. Opposed to almost everything that happened in American politics for past 20 years.
2. John Birch Society attacks Communists, liberals, "a high percentage of those whom Welch attacks are middle-of-the-road, and even conservative Republicans."⁶
3. Other ultra conservatives include: Dan Smoot of Texas, Carl McIntire, Myers G. Lowman, and Edgar C. Bundy.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁶ Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, *The Strange Tactics of Extremism* (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 43.

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